

# Diet pills: contents, risks, efficacy and recommendations

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Diet Pills: Contents, Risks, Efficacy and Recommendations Recently people have been concerned with their figures as the current trends dictate the beautiful body figure based on certain criteria. Mainly, businesses serve as the agents of change in popularizing certain external characteristics as desirable or not. In turn, people follow the popular trend and tend to take care of their body size. They want to have desirable figures in front of other people as they feel such characteristics add up to their overall confidence. The trend is also affected by the growing awareness of people regarding the increasing cases of obesity around the world. In United States alone, the statistics show the prevalence of adult obesity in year 2000 “ from 30. 5% of the population, and ... rose to 30. 6 in 2002 and 32. 2% in 2004,” (Durand and Barlow 317). The significant rise in the cases of obesity may be attributed to various factors that affect the physical health, psychological condition and social life of people starting from their childhood. The technological advancement erodes the appeal of physical activities especially to the children who prefer to use computer the whole day with minimal physical activities. In addition, the promotion of food with high calories and poor nutrients has led to the boost in obesity cases. As a result, children experience diabetes, cancer and asthma at an early age together with psychological effects like trauma, loss of self-esteem and inferiority complex (Cassell and Gleaves 89). With the aforementioned conditions, people seek ways to reduce weight and get a slim body for each of them. Some will try to reduce their calories by eating less than usual while others will do a lot of exercises to burn their fats. For people who like to get quick results, they prefer to take diet pills. Those drugs may be sold with our

without the prescription of a doctor depending upon their contents and effects on the users. Some studies have confirmed that the use of weight loss pills may have detrimental effects on the health of the users as some of them ignore those consequences. In addition, they take the pills together with unhealthy practices that may even aggravate their condition (Sztainer et al. 953). They do not mind the consequences as they stay focus on losing weight which may be attributed to the beliefs of losing weight easily, social praises for being fit, too much faith on advertising claims, and the assumption of 100 percent safety with the pills (Saper et al. 1731). In reality, they may be some side effects with the use of any drugs like diet pills. Various contents may have different side effects depending on their mechanism for reducing the weight of the taker. Stimulating and energy-spending supplements with Ephedra alkaloids and caffeine increase the risk of stroke, myocardial arrhythmias and hypertension while supplements for controlling the carbohydrate metabolism like ginseng and chromium may produce a lot of damaged free radicals and rhabdomyolysis. On the other hand, substances that produce the feeling of having filled stomach like guar gum have no enough evidences for weight loss effects (Saper et al. 1733). Those substances have health benefits when taken in small amounts, but they may produce long-term adverse effects when used regularly and at higher doses. In addition to the aforementioned substances, hydroxycitric acids, L-Carnitine, chitosan, dandelion, Laminaria and other substances are also commonly used for weight loss. Hydroxytric acids and conjugated linoleic acids are said to reduce the production of fats, but studies have found them to be ineffective. For L-carnitine, it is not proven to reduce

weight based on human trials. The same applies to chitosan which is a substance for stopping fat absorption since it has been found out to be ineffective too (Saper et al. 1734). In the case of dandelion, it has diuretic side effect that may be detrimental to health when taken for a long time just like traditional diuretics. It may cause dehydration. In the case of Laminaria, it has not been proven yet to reduce weight (Saper et al. 1735). All of the said substances are ingredients in diet pills, but mostly have no sufficient studies to support the claims. On top of that, some of them have serious side effects. Studies even have taken note of the prevalence of the use of diet pills especially those non-prescriptive pills which mean anybody can buy the drugs without the advice from a medical doctor. One particular study made use of 14679 participants from five states were observed using Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System regarding the use of diet pills in 1998 (Blanck et al. 931). Results showed that two percent used PPA while one percent used ephedra. The use of the diet pills without prescription was most common among women at type one and type two obesity with a percentage of 28.4. In addition, almost eight percent of women with normal weight admitted to use weight loss products (Blanck et al. 932). It has been found out that the use of diet products increase especially for non-prescriptive products when the rate of obesity increase. In response, health professionals must know about the situation and assist their patients well in choosing the ways to reduce their weight like lifestyle change. Work Cited Blanck, Heidi, Laura Khan and Mary Serdula. " Use of Nonprescription Weight Loss Products: Results from a Multistate Survey." *Journal of American Medical Association* 286. 8 (2001): 930-935. Print. Cassell, Dana and David Gleaves.

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