

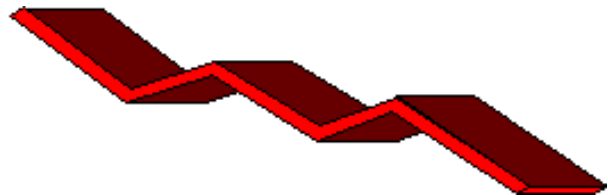
Fad Diets: Healthy or Hazardous???

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Characteristics of Fad Diets

Consumers spend billions of dollars every year on fad diets. Fad diets make promises that sound too good to resist. Unfortunately, the weight lost on fad diets often is quickly regained. Even worse, some fad diets can damage your health. If a diet has the characteristics below, it is almost certainly a fad diet.

- Usually promises quick weight loss of more than 1 to 2 pounds weekly.
- Promotes methods of weight loss that seem too good to be true.
- Implies that weight can be lost or maintained without exercise or lifestyle changes.
- Uses scare tactics to promote a specific diet plan.
- Restricts or eliminates certain foods that are the supposed “culprits” of causing weight gain.
- Rarely addresses the need to control the size of food portions eaten.
- Insists the dieter eat specific foods or food combinations that have no scientific validity in helping a person to lose weight.
- Offers rigid menu plans that do not follow the U.S. Dietary Guidelines or the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Makes weight loss claims using personal testimonials and case studies that are not verified with scientific evidence.
- Often encourages the dieter to eat as much as he or she wants of a particular food while prescribing a daily caloric intake that is well below average requirements for a healthy adult.
- May be deficient in major nutrients such as dietary fiber, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and protective phytochemicals due to lack of variety recommended.
- May prescribe a diet plan that is higher in protein and fat while lower in carbohydrate than is safe and healthy for all individuals.



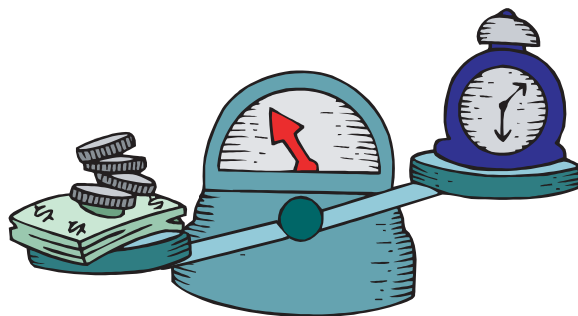
Sort Fact from Fiction about High Protein Diets

1. High protein diets are also called low carbohydrate diets. Most high protein diets are also high in fat. High protein (or low carbohydrate) diets contain almost no fruits, vegetables, grains, or cereals. These diets are rich in meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, and dairy products. They promote the intake of foods that are high in protein as well as fat and cholesterol.
2. Diets high in protein and fat are NOT recommended by major health organizations like the American Heart Association, The American Dietetic Association, the Surgeon General, the Food & Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture.
3. Some high protein (low-carbohydrate) diets are Atkins New Diet Revolution, Calories Don't Count Diet, Drinking Man's Diet, Mayo Diet, Protein-Sparing Fast, Scarsdale Diet, Simeons HCG Diet, Ski Team Diet, Stillman Diet, and the Zone Diet. New ones keep coming out under new names, but are essentially the same diet.
4. Any diet too low in carbohydrates will cause the body to respond as it does when a person fasts (or starves). Many of these diets enjoy surges of popularity because of some sizable initial weight loss. Because high protein diets are low in carbohydrates, they tend to promote urine output, which causes the loss of

water weight. This diuretic effect may create a false sense of weight loss. When a normal diet is resumed, water weight is regained.

5. During the first 2 weeks on a high-protein diet, the carbohydrate intake is lower than normal and some body fat is burned. But, without carbohydrates, the body does not burn the fat completely, and substances called ketones are formed and released into your bloodstream. *This condition called ketosis makes dieting easier because it often depresses your appetite and may even cause nausea. Ketosis is the body's way to adapt to a high protein diet or to fasting.*

Ketosis is NOT a normal state for the body and may cause dehydration, dizziness, constipation, weakness, irritability, bad breath, and headaches. After a few weeks, ketosis may cause gout or kidney stones due to high uric acid levels created by high protein levels of the diet. Authors of these high protein diets actually advise consumers to "take advantage" of ketosis to hasten weight loss. But, ketosis is one of the body's last-ditch emergency responses. Ketosis can be fatal in individuals with diabetes. During pregnancy, ketosis may cause abnormal development of the baby, or death. For these reasons, the state of ketosis can be dangerous. Plus, it will not lead to permanent, healthy weight loss.



Much money and time are spent on fad diets that do not help consumers maintain permanent weight loss.

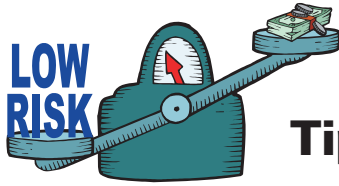
Why is a High Protein Diet Unhealthy Over Time?

Over an extended period of time, high protein (low carbohydrate) diets can cause other health risks. For example, these diets contain too little fiber, which may cause constipation and other intestinal problems. Other risks are described below.

- 1. Heart Disease Risk** increases when consuming a diet high in animal protein, cholesterol, and saturated fat. All three raise serum cholesterol and Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) or “bad cholesterol”. A high meat intake may increase homocysteine, an amino acid that increases in the blood stream when levels of dietary protein are up. High homocysteine levels may lead to clogged arteries and heart disease. Eating high fiber foods and those rich in folic acid, such as green leafy vegetables and fruit lowers heart disease risk. Also recommended are whole grains and dairy products with little or no fat content. Whole grain foods are beneficial as well.
- 2. Long-Term Weight Loss** is not maintained on fad diets because the type and variety of food suggested is usually limited and may lead to boredom and cravings over time. These diets may lead to bingeing on foods high in sugar and fat and backsliding into old habits.
- 3. Gout** may be caused by an increased intake of meats, poultry, nuts, seeds, eggs, and seafood that are high in compounds called purines. High amounts of purines in the diet cause uric acid levels to rise in the body. When uric acid levels increase, susceptible individuals may experience joint pain.
- 4. Kidney Stones**, in susceptible individuals, may be caused by both uric acid and calcium oxalate stones, which are likely to form on a high protein, ketogenic diet.
- 5. Osteoporosis** may develop when diets contain excess protein from animal sources, which increases calcium loss in the urine. Low-fat and nonfat dairy products contain rich sources of calcium, phosphorus, and Vitamin D and are helpful in providing adequate calcium to reduce the risks of this condition.
- 6. Fainting** or a rapid drop in blood pressure is often caused by loss of fluid and electrolytes when following a high protein diet.
- 7. Bad Breath or “Keto Breath”** is caused by high protein, low carbohydrate diets and the incomplete breakdown of fatty acids.

Nutrition Resources on Diets for Weight Loss

- **Rutgers Cooperative Extension** - www.rce.rutgers.edu
- **Weight Control Information Network** - www.niddk.nih.gov
- **The American Dietetic Association** - www.eatright.org
- **The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management issues** - *Voluntary Guidelines for Providers of Weight Loss Products or Services*. For a copy of the Guidelines - www.consumer.gov/weightloss or write: Federal Trade Commission, Consumer Response Center, 601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 4302, Washington, DC 20580, Attn: Partnership for Healthy Weight Management.
- **The American Institute for Cancer Research** - www.aicr.org/
- **The International Food Information Council** - ificinfo.health.org



Tips for Sound Weight Loss

- **Exercise**—5 days per week for 30 minutes daily moderate exercise is recommended. Try walking—the more you move, the more you will lose. Add strength training 2 to 3 times per week to build muscle.
- **Drink Water**—water keeps you hydrated and is calorie free.
- **Eat Breakfast**—eat whole grain cereal, fruit and fat-free milk for increased energy and alertness in the morning. Avoid high sugar and high fat foods.
- **Persistence**—make exercise and meal times a **MUST** each day. Healthy habits for a lifetime requires daily effort on your part.
- **Eat at Home**—as often as possible so that you can plan your meals and snacks to include basic foods that are low in fat, salt, sugar, and calories. Use smaller dishes at meals. Serve plates in the kitchen and don't have second helpings. Put leftovers away quickly. Plan for a week ahead, prepare and use a list for your weekly supermarket shopping.
- **Follow the Food Guide Pyramid.** The Food Guide Pyramid is a diagram that conveys the basics of planning a diet that includes variety, moderation, and reasonable serving sizes of foods. It encourages Americans to consume a plant-based diet high in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables with adequate low-fat dairy and protein portions daily. Americans need to watch their portion sizes because some people eat more than they think. Those excess calories add inches to the waistline and result in weight gain. Following the recommendations of serving sizes and food groups can help in planning a diet adequate in nutrients and calories for good health.
- **Eat Plenty of Fruits & Vegetables**—Eat five or more servings per day at meals. Replace refined snack foods that lack vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytochemicals with fruits and vegetables.
- **Eat Regularly**—Don't go more than 5 hours during the day without eating. Waiting too long to eat can cause you to be so hungry that you overeat. Eat several healthy, low-fat snacks if more than 5 hours will pass before your next meal.
- **Relax**—Overeating for many is caused by stress and over scheduling. Take a deep breath and count to 10 before grabbing that cookie or other high calorie food. Instead, take a short walk or a drink of water.
- **Write it Down**—Keep track of your food intake and daily exercise on a calendar to determine what is happening with your weight and energy levels. Records are important for you and for your health care professional when seeking guidance.
- **Understand Science-Based Nutrition**—Know about the latest research so that you don't rely on fad diets, celebrities, TV infomercials, advertisements of quick weight loss products, or questionable web sites. For more credible nutrition information on weight loss contact the organizations in the boxed section on the previous page.

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