

All You Need To Know About Fad Diets

What's wrong with trying one of these fad diets? The ads say they work. Why wouldn't they help me lose weight?

Fad diets aren't eating plans put out by health organizations. They are the popular diets that people talk about. They are money-makers. The books are best sellers.

Fad diets have appeal because they promise to have the long-awaited magic formula. They promise that you will lose weight and keep it off without feeling hungry or deprived. The ads show them doing great things for people. They promise to help you lose weight, and lose it fast. It's all so easy, they say. Fad diets always seem to have a gimmick. A trick that makes them work.

Sometimes a fad diet can help you lose weight for a little while. But not for long. The evidence shows that most people regain the weight they've lost by dieting. Often they gain back even more than they lost. Over the long haul, diets don't work, and they could be harmful to your health.

But there is plenty of scientific evidence showing that a healthy lifestyle-change program like the TLP can help you lose weight. It also gives you a better chance to keep it off.

Another problem with fad diets is that sometimes people who try a fad diet blame themselves when they can't stick to it. They may get so discouraged that they don't keep trying to lose weight. They just give up.

How diets work - they cut calories

Some diets have you cut out a certain type of food. Maybe it's milk products. Maybe it's bread. Some diets have you eat a few special foods. Maybe it's bread. Maybe it's meat and cheese.

For example, low carbohydrate diets tell you to avoid fruits, breads, milk products, and some vegetables. Of course you will lose weight. If you are not eating the bread, milk, fruits,

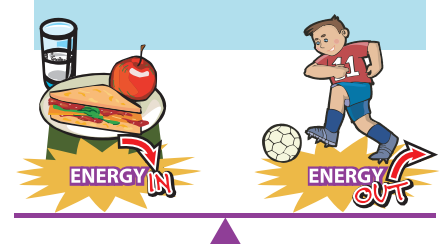
KEY GOALS

Continue to work on your 4 key goals:

- Limit RED foods
- Increase GREEN activity
- Hold Family Meetings
- Keep Track of Weight

Remember energy balance?

- Calories measure energy.
- Your weight stays the same when the energy you eat equals the energy you burn up.
- You lose weight when you burn up more calories than you eat.
- You gain weight when you eat more calories than you burn up.



Here's what you'll learn about in this module:

- Why fad diets won't help you
- How fad diets can be dangerous
- How to lose weight and keep it off



and starchy vegetables you usually eat, you are eating fewer calories.

Tricks like these can sometimes help you lose weight—for a while. But if it works for a while, it isn't because of some magic formula. It works because you are eating fewer calories. That tips the energy balance in your favor. But guess what happens as soon as you stop dieting? You gain back the weight—sometimes even more than you lost.

How fad diets harm your body - they cut nutrients

Here are some ways dieting can hurt you:

- ▶ **Cutting Out Food Groups.** Some diets have you **cut out** some of the food groups. Sure, this can help you lose weight—for a while. You will always lose weight if you're eating fewer calories. But this approach may rob your body of some of the vitamins and minerals it needs to be healthy. This can be especially harmful



to young people. For example, your brain is still growing until you are 19. To develop normally, it really needs the right nutrients. But cutting out food groups cuts out nutrients. That's not healthy. In fact, it's harmful.

An eating plan that **limits** RED foods is a much healthier way to lose weight. That's what the TLP does. It helps you limit your RED foods to 3 per day. That's just the right amount of RED foods, and it's still few enough to help you lose weight.

- ▶ **Crash Dieting.** This is an effort to lose a lot of weight fast. Perhaps your clothes are too tight. Perhaps there's a big dance coming soon. So you eat nothing but salad or fruit juice for a week. Or you eat less than 1,000 calories a day.

The scale shows that you have lost weight. Maybe 5 pounds in a week. It seems like you can lose a lot of weight fast if you just don't eat. But this weight won't stay off. That's because you haven't lost 5 pounds of fat. You've just lost a lot of water. You've drained your body of water it needs. This isn't healthy.

It's also hard to continue eating almost nothing. And guess what? As soon as you begin eating normally again, your body sucks the water out of food. The weight you thought you had lost comes right back.

Eating less than 1,000 calories a day is not healthy. It will rob your body of the nutrients it needs to be healthy.

There are other ways crash dieting is harmful. Eating less than 1,000 calories robs your body of the vitamins, minerals, and energy it needs to be healthy. When you are eating so little, you may have less energy to do things. You may not feel like being physically active. You tire more easily. You may feel moody. It's harder to focus. Your body even burns calories more slowly than before.

Not eating enough makes you very hungry. So you are more likely to overeat when you do eat. Then you starve yourself again. Then you overeat. This harmful cycle continues.

- ▶ **Continued Crashing.** Sometimes people eat very few calories for a long time. With less energy coming in than you need, your body begins to have problems. You may lose muscle mass. Organs may have trouble doing their jobs. This can be very unhealthy. It's like starving yourself. What started as a crash diet has become a serious health problem. In some cases this could be a sign of an eating disorder and professional help may be needed.



Stick to the TLP and healthy lifestyle changes.

The TLP teaches you to make healthy lifestyle changes. It helps you do the two things that can help you lose weight and keep it off:

- ▶ You change your eating habits.

- ▶ You increase your physical activity.

This tips the energy balance. You take in fewer calories. You burn up more calories. You lose real weight. You don't cut out food groups. You need food from all of the food groups, including the Fats, Oils, & Sweets Group. But you manage your eating habits better. You

The most weight you can safely lose in a week is 2-3 pounds. You may harm your body by trying to lose more.

Alicia's friend Rita went on a crash diet. She wanted to look good for the swimsuit season. She worked at it for a while. She ate very little. In fact, she ate less than 1,200 calories a day. Rita was excited. She lost 15 pounds in a month.

Alicia talked to her mother about Rita. "I don't know whether to admire her or worry about her," she said. "She seems to get tired more often. She's more irritable. She also has a hard time staying focused on her schoolwork. I don't know if it's all because of her diet. But it might be."

"I'm sure it is," her mother said. "That's what happens when someone doesn't eat enough. People on crash diets don't have the energy to keep up. They really aren't themselves. Losing more than 2-3 pounds a week is unhealthy."

Alicia was surprised to see Rita eating a cheeseburger a few weeks later. Rita said, "I can't diet all the time. I'll be careful and try to stay at the same weight."

Alicia told her mother that Rita had gone back to her old eating habits. "That's not surprising," her mother said. "It's very hard to stick to a diet that does not have enough nutrients or calories to give you energy. That's one reason the TLP Eating Plan is so good."

It wasn't long before Rita gained back all the weight she had lost. She told Alicia how discouraged she was. That's when Alicia told her about making lifestyle changes.

"Did you know that I'm using a special eating plan? It's great. It helps me lose weight and manage my diabetes," she said. "I think it could help you lose weight too."

Rita asked how it worked. Alicia explained about limiting RED foods. She told her about eating more GREEN and YELLOW foods, especially fruits and vegetables. She even showed her the Food Reference Guide.

"But it's more than just changing the way you eat," said Alicia. "I'm also trying to get more physical activity. That's why I always ask you to walk with me. Being active burns up calories. It helps me be healthier. Would you like to join me making lifestyle changes?"

"I sure would," Rita said. She was very excited. Alicia was excited too. She could help Rita and have another person in her support network!

Why didn't Rita's diet work?

How will the new plan help both Alicia and Rita?

If you cut out 500 calories a day for a week, you will lose about one pound. If you cut out 1,000 calories a day, you will lose about 2 pounds.

eat more GREEN foods. You eat smaller portions. You limit RED foods. You eat enough to satisfy your body's needs. But you don't eat when you're not hungry. You don't eat more than your body needs. You eat healthy.

This is a plan that you can continue all your life. That's why it's called a lifestyle change. The TLP isn't the only eating plan like this. But all the other plans that work do the same things. They teach you to eat healthy in a reasonable way. A balanced way.

Physical activity burns up calories. It makes you stronger. It helps your muscles grow. You lose fat. Not only do you look better, but you are healthier. And it helps you lose

more weight. Muscles burn up more calories than fat. Even when you are resting, your muscles are burning up more calories than fat. This helps the energy balance even more.

A safe weight loss is 2-3 pounds a week. That's how much weight in fat you can safely lose. You can harm your body by trying to lose more. That's why losing weight is a step-by-step process. That's why the TLP goal is 1-2 pounds a week.



What's behind your interest in a fad diet?

If you're just curious, that's fine. But if you are concerned that you are not losing weight as fast as you want, it's time to look at your progress. What are your goals? Are you meeting them? Do you need to do some problem-solving? Do you need a better plan?



What will help me maintain my progress?

- ▶ Stick to what works. The TLP Eating Plan works.

Skills and Goals for weight loss

- ▶ Avoid fad diets.
- ▶ Follow the TLP Eating Plan.
- ▶ Talk about any weight-loss questions you have with your parents and your PAL.

It's based on science. It's healthy. It's a plan for life.

Problem-solve if you aren't meeting your weight goals. Use your Lifestyle Log. What barriers are holding you back?

- ▶ Record more carefully if you can't see the problem right away. Use the more complete Lifestyle Log. This is the one you got started with. Record all the foods and calories you eat for two weeks. That should help you see more clearly what the problem is.

Set special goals for yourself. Plan step-by-step goals that will help you move forward.

Notes to myself—some things I want to keep in mind this week:

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What Do You Know About Losing Weight Safely?

1. It's safe to lose ____ per week.
 - A. As many pounds as you can
 - B. Up to 5 pounds
 - C. Up to 2-3 pounds
2. Losing more than 3 pounds per week means you are _____.
 - A. Reaching your goal
 - B. Helping your body
 - C. Hurting your body
3. It is unhealthy to eat less than ____ calories a day.
 - A. 1,800
 - B. 1,500
 - C. 1,000
4. People who lose a lot of weight quickly usually _____.
 - A. Keep it off
 - B. Gain it back
 - C. Are helping themselves
5. The best way to lose weight, stay healthy, and keep weight off is to _____.
 - A. Diet
 - B. Diet and exercise
 - C. Limit RED foods and increase GREEN activity

Answers:
1. C 2. C 3. C 4. B 5. C

Are You Meeting Your Goals?

If you are thinking about trying a fad diet, you may not be meeting your weight goals. It's time to see where you stand. If you're making steady progress, praise yourself. If you think you can do better, now is a good time to make a plan to meet your goals.

Checking up on my Weight Goals

- My weight at the start of the Maintenance Phase
- My weight now
- Change in weight
- My goal by the end of the Maintenance Phase
- Number of weeks into the Maintenance Phase now
- Number of weeks left in the Maintenance Phase
- How much more I have to lose to meet my goal

Are You Meeting Your Goals? (continued)

Checking up on my RED food and calorie goals

- My RED food goal per day
- Average number of RED foods a day over the past 2 weeks
- Number of RED foods a day I need to cut in order to meet my goals
- My calorie goal per day
- Average number of calories a day over the past 2 weeks
- How many more calories a day would I need to cut out to meet my goal?

My Goal:

My interest in meeting my goal: (0 = not at all, 10 = very much)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What makes me so interested in this goal?

What would it take to make me more interested?

How will meeting this goal help me meet other goals?

How confident am I that I can meet my goal: (0 = not at all, 10 = very much)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What makes me this confident I can meet this goal?

What would it take to make me more confident?

What can I do to meet this goal now?

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Celebrate Your Success

What are some of the important behaviors you have changed? These are things you have learned to do well. You may not do them all the time. But you do them often enough to really help yourself. These are changes you should praise yourself for. Tell your parents.

Behaviors I have changed to help me limit RED foods	Resources that have helped me limit RED foods
1. Drinking low-fat milk at home instead of whole milk or soda	1. My parents buy low-fat milk and encourage me
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Plan for RED Food Barriers

What are some barriers that make it difficult to eat healthy? What resources can you use to deal with these barriers?

Barriers that make it hard to limit RED foods	Resources that can help me limit RED foods
1. Soda at school	1. Drinking water; friends who encourage me to drink water instead of soda
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

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Fad diets won't help you. They could harm your health.

- ▶ No scientific evidence backs up fad diet claims.
- ▶ Most people regain the weight they've lost. Often they gain back even more.
- ▶ There's no magic about fad diets. The only reason you lose weight is because you are eating fewer calories.
- ▶ A fad diet may rob your body of the vitamins and minerals it needs to be healthy.



Medical facts to keep in mind:

- ▶ If you cut 500 calories a day for a week, you will lose about one pound. Cut 1,000 calories, and you will lose about 2 pounds.
- ▶ 2-3 pounds is the most weight you can safely lose in a week. You can harm your body by trying to lose more.
- ▶ Your body needs nutrients from all the food groups to develop normally.
- ▶ If you eat less than 1,000 calories a day, you will:
 - ▶ Rob your body of the nutrients it needs to be healthy.
 - ▶ Have less energy. You may feel moody. It may be hard to focus.
 - ▶ Lose water weight at first. This hurts your body. You will regain water weight as soon as you stop starving yourself.
 - ▶ Lose muscle mass if you continue.
 - ▶ Hurt your organs if you continue longer.

What should you do if you are tempted to try a fad diet?

- ▶ Stick to the TLP lifestyle change plan. It's based on science. It's healthy. It works long-term. It helps you do the two things that can help you lose weight and keep it off:
 - ▶ You improve your eating habits.
 - ▶ You increase your physical activity.
- ▶ Problem-solve if you aren't meeting your weight goals. Use your Lifestyle Log. What barriers are holding you back?
- ▶ Record more carefully if you can't see the problem right away. Record all the foods and calories you eat for two weeks.
- ▶ Set special goals for yourself. Small changes in eating and GREEN activity can lead to long-term changes.