

Fad Diets Are Dangerous

There's no getting around it -- a whopping 70 percent of Americans are overweight, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That hefty statistic leaves many of us searching more frantically than ever for the magic weight-loss answer. All those glossy hardbacks on display at the bookstore provide the diet fodder we're hungry for: *Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution*, *The Zone*, *Sugar-Busters!* ...

While these diet programs promise quick and effortless weight loss, many experts think that the only guaranteed weight loss will be from your **wallet**. So why are these "fad diets" so wildly popular, and do any of them actually work?

The lure of fad diets stems from the fact that most of them offer a quick fix. "Fad diets really give a great promise ... and a lot of them really do give quick results," says Leslie Bonci, director of sports nutrition for the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh.

There's no strict definition of a "fad diet," according to experts, but a common thread is the tendency to categorize foods in the extreme: Certain foods are either good or bad, entire food groups are restricted or eliminated, and changes in eating behaviors are not promoted.

According to Bonci, "Fad diets pretty much all promise that you only have to do them for a short amount of time. They usually rely on some kind of a gimmick -- for example, an emphasis on protein to the exclusion of all else, or some kind of food combination, or a particular mix of things," that will draw your attention purely because it's unusual.

Bonci explains that the majority of popular diets fall into four basic categories:

- **High-Protein/Fat, Low-Carbohydrate Diets:** Atkins, Protein Power, and the Carbohydrate Addict's Diet
- **High Carbohydrate, Moderate Protein/Low-Fat Diets:** Dr. Dean Ornish's Eat More, Weigh Less; F-Plan; and Pritikin
- **Food Combinations:** The Zone, Sugar Busters!, Eat Right for Your Blood Type, Fit for Life, and Suzanne Somers's Get Skinny
- **Gimmicks:** The Cabbage Soup Diet, Beverly Hills Diet, and the 5-Day Miracle Diet are based on the "fat-burning" potential of certain foods.

Fad diets are being used in record numbers by dieters desperate to lose weight at the fastest rate possible. Although these diets do allow dieters to lose weight they also tend to leave dieters with *loose weight*. Fad diets are diets that are used for short periods of time with great or exaggerated zeal. And unfortunately these diets leave its users with the dreaded loose weight syndrome.

These diets cause the dreaded loose weight syndrome because fast weight loss is a result of losing water weight and muscle tissue with little to no fat loss. Many dieters do not understand that there even is a difference between losing weight and losing fat when deciding to begin one of the many popular fad diets. So, loose weight is in reference to having flabby folds of skin due to the loss of water and muscle tissue with limited to no fat loss.

Unfortunately many dieters do not care how they lose weight when using fad diets as long as they lose weight. Acquiring loose weight as a result of crash dieting is typically not the fault of the dieter however because the average dieter is ignorant to the subject of proper nutrition and is therefore at the mercy of believing what they are told by the weight loss industry. And fad diets are a gimmick by the weight loss industry to make billions of dollars each year off of people desperate to lose weight. And lose weight they do, unfortunately this weight loss causes loose weight.

Fad diets will continue to be used in record numbers as there will always be dieters who only care about watching the bathroom scale go down every morning regardless of where the weight comes from. You see, fad diets are given this name for a reason, because they do not work but for short periods of time.