

Navigating Commercial Diets

Did You Know?

Weight loss programs and commercial diets are not regulated in Canada. It is important to be able to tell the difference between a quality weight loss program and a fad diet! Find out how to be a savvy consumer and spot the red flags of a fad diet.

What is a Fad Diet?

A fad diet is a popular diet that usually promises weight loss. A fad diet often sounds “too good to be true” and does not follow healthy eating guidelines that support good health. The following are fad diet red flags.

Your weight loss program may be a fad diet if it:

- ▶ Promises weight loss of more than 2 pounds (1 kg) per week.
- ▶ Does not provide support for long-term weight loss success.
- ▶ Restricts you to less than 800 calories a day.
- ▶ Is rigid and does not fit into your lifestyle or state of health.
- ▶ Cuts out major food categories (like gluten or carbohydrates) and stops you from enjoying your favourite foods.
- ▶ Forces you to buy the company's foods or supplements rather than show you how to make better choices from a grocery store.
- ▶ Uses “counsellors” who are salespeople. Weight management counsellors should not make a commission from anything you buy.
- ▶ Gives you nutrition advice that is based on testimonials rather than scientific evidence.
- ▶ Promotes unproven ways to lose weight such as starch blockers, fat burners, and colonic cleanses.
- ▶ Does not encourage physical activity.

Common Fad Diets

Ketogenic Diet

Classic keto diets include very high levels of fat (75-90% of calories), relatively low levels of protein (5-20% of calories), and extremely low levels of carbohydrates (less than 5% of calories) and may also be calorie restricted.

Paleo or Paleolithic Diet (Caveman Diet)

It is based on the idea that eating the types of foods that our early ancestors might have eaten is healthier for our bodies while eating some foods lead to obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

- ▶ Foods included are mainly meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, and nuts (not including peanuts)
- ▶ Foods avoided come from agriculture (or farming) such as grain products, dairy, and legumes (beans, peas, and lentils), as well as sugar, salt, and processed foods

Atkins Diet

A restrictive diet suggesting a high-protein, high-fat, and very low-carbohydrate regimen.

- ▶ Emphasizes meat, cheese, and eggs
- ▶ No limits on the number of calories or quantities of foods allowed on the diet
- ▶ Requires use of some supplements and in the long term can result in vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

The Zone Diet

This diet claims to reduce inflammation, promote weight loss, and control blood sugars. It suggests a plate with 40% carbohydrates, 30% protein, and 30% fats. Though the eating pattern may be linked to several benefits, the proponents of the diet also make many strong and unfounded health claims around its efficacy.

The Dukan Diet

A high-protein, low-carb weight loss, four phase, restrictive fad diet that claims to produce rapid weight loss without hunger.

Other Fad Diets:

The Blood Type Diet, Cabbage Diet, Detox Diet, General Motors Diet, Gluten-Free Diet, ...and endless more.



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The Bottom Line

- There are no foods or pills that magically burn fat.
- No super foods will alter your genetic code.
- No products will miraculously melt fat while you watch TV or sleep.
- Some ingredients in supplements and herbal products can be dangerous and even deadly for some people.
- Steer clear of any diet plans, pills, and products that make the following claims: Rapid weight loss, specific food combinations, rigid menus, and/or no need for exercise.

References:

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<https://obesitycanada.ca/guidelines/nutrition/>

https://www.diabetes.ca/health-care-providers/clinical-practice-guidelines/chapter-11#panel-tab_FullText

