

# Fad Diets

Have you ever heard about the diet that helps you drop 14 pounds in just a week? What about the one where you lose weight without having to eat less junk food or go to the gym? If this sounds familiar, you have probably heard of something called "fad diets".

## What Are Fad Diets?

"Fad" means something that is popular for a short period of time. "Diet" is a set of foods that we eat often or everyday. "Fad diets" are diet plans that often promise big weight loss in a short time by following strict rules for the foods you can eat.

## Why Are Fad Diets So Popular?

Fad diets have been around for ages and they will probably be around for many years to come. Fad diets seem to offer a lot without having to do much. People tend to be attracted to fad diets because they want to lose weight, but they want to do it fast and without having to do any work for it. Everyone is looking for that quick fix or that magic pill to help them lose weight.

## Do Fad Diets Really Work?

If fad diets don't work, you are probably wondering why everyone is always talking about them. Well, the truth is, there are some people who lose weight with fad diets and these are usually the stories that we hear about on TV, in magazines, or from other people. However, what we don't hear about is that the weight loss usually does not last

long and it is often quickly regained. Many fad diets tend to have strict rules about the types of food that you can and cannot eat. Not being allowed to eat certain foods can make it hard to follow a diet for a long time. Many people end up quitting the diet. After the diet is stopped, all the weight that was lost (and sometimes more) is usually gained back.

## Are Fad Diets Dangerous?

Kids and teens have bodies that are still growing. This means that it is very important that they get lots of healthy foods to give them all the calories and nutrients they need to help them grow properly. Many fad diets are very low in calories or cut out whole food groups, which make them an unhealthy choice for kids and teens. Not getting enough calories could mean not growing taller. Not getting enough of certain foods could mean weak bones or feeling dizzy. Fad diets that use special drinks, herbs, or pills can be extra dangerous because we don't always know what is in these products and how they may affect our bodies. The bottom line is that kids and teens should never go on extreme diets to try to lose weight. This can be harmful to your health. If you are at an unhealthy weight, talk to your doctor about what you can do to get to a healthy weight.

# Keep Your Eyes Open for Fad Diets

If something sounds too good to be true, it usually is. Ask yourself the following questions to help you spot fad diets:

- ✎ Does the diet make you cut back on a lot of calories?
- ✎ Does the diet only allow you to eat certain types of food?
- ✎ Does the diet make you cut out all carbohydrates, fats, or sugars?
- ✎ Do you need to take any special pills, powders, or herbs as part of the diet?
- ✎ Does the diet ask you to skip meals or replace them with special drinks or bars?
- ✎ Does the diet promise a large amount of weight loss in a very short amount of time?
- ✎ Does the diet plan say that you do not have to be physically active?
- ✎ Is the diet only meant to be followed for a short time?

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, you have probably spotted a fad diet.

## Better Ways to Get a Healthy Body Weight

### Eat Well!

#### Tips on healthy eating:

- 👍 Eat more fruits and vegetables
- 👍 Eat more whole grains
- 👍 Don't skip meals
- 👍 Pick low fat meats and milk products
- 👍 Watch your portion sizes

To get your copy of Canada's Food Guide, click onto:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index->

### Get Active!

#### Tips on getting more activity:

- 👍 Walk to school more often
- 👍 Join a sports team or take dance lessons
- 👍 Take the stairs more often
- 👍 Get up and move around during TV commercials
- 👍 Go for walks as a family

To get your copy of Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth, click onto:

[http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child\\_youth/index.htm](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/paguide/child_youth/index.htm)