

Don't Fall Victim to Fad Diets!

In a society obsessed with getting thin fast, it is no surprise that fad diets have been around for over a century. In fact, an Atkins-type diet, a high protein, low-carb regime, was introduced in 1860 London (by William Banting).

Unfortunately, fad diets are creating an opposite result – people are not getting thinner as overweight and obesity in this country has reached epidemic proportions.

With more than 80 percent of 4th grade girls resorting to fad dieting, (1) the need for sound nutrition education starts at a young age. From cabbage soup to grapefruit to pork rinds, fad diets commonly promise that one type of food is the panacea for weight loss. But nutrition experts contend that we need to be aware, if it seems too good to be true – it usually is.

Beware of dangers

Although fad diets seem to work well in the short-term, they are a temporary fix that doesn't last long and can boomerang to a greater gain in the end. Fads can be dangerous. Fad diets usually over-emphasize one food or type of food. They violate the first principle of good nutrition, which is to eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of nutrient dense, low-cal foods.

Trim down without the fad in 5 easy-to-follow steps

1) Become a mindful eater.

Everyday we make more than

200 food-related decisions, however 90 percent of those we are unaware of, according to Brian Wansink's, PhD, book *Mindless Eating* (2006). In other words, by taking an active role in when and what foods you eat, you will automatically take a healthy step forward. Choose lower calorie foods and eat less.

2) Lower your calorie intake.

Eat a low-fat, high-fiber diet. Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables everyday. Make sure you eat small low-cal meals on a regular basis. Avoid sugar and fat and other high-cal temptations.

3) Stay hydrated the right way.

Go for water and decaffeinated beverages throughout the day. Avoid sugar-laden beverages – they are not only high in calories, but can actually increase thirst.

4) See what you eat. In this world of multitasking,

eating has become lumped in with other activities, such as eating when driving, talking on the phone, while watching TV. Put what you are going to eat on a plate and don't eat out of the bag. Set aside time to eat a good meal.

5) Get moving. Permanent weight loss is not only about eating less, but

exercising, too. Accord-



ing to the National Weight Control Registry, successful weight loss and maintenance relies on both a healthy eating plan and regular physical activity. Aim for 60-90 minutes of physical activity every day to lose and maintain weight loss. Always consult a physician before beginning an exercise regimen. *By Victoria Shanta Retelny, RD, LD*

4-step "TOO" check for fads

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, there are some basic fad diet tell-tale signs:

- **TOO FAST:** promise of fast and easy weight loss (more than 1 to 2-pounds per week)
- **TOO EASY:** no need to avoid "fatty" foods or exercise regularly
- **TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE:** claims based on photos of "before" and "after" results advertisements that include testimonials for clients and "experts" in science and nutrition (as they are most likely paid to advertise the plan or product)
- **TOO MUCH MONEY:** expensive propositions that require you to buy special food, pills or seminars.