



realistic DIETS

“Lose eighteen pounds in four days!”

“Eat anything you want and still lose weight!”

“Lose weight while you sleep!”

These are just a few examples of unrealistic claims made by companies promoting fad diets. Many people have been intrigued by these headlines at some point, particularly after the holidays, when that inevitable guilt sets in right after the New Year. Still, while people think they know better, they can be lured in because it is appealing to shed those unwanted pounds and FAST, especially with little work!

The reason these plans are successful initially is because they restrict calories. Any time you restrict calories, weight loss will occur, no matter what type of “diet” you try or foods you cut out. The problem occurs when calories are severely restricted: the metabolism slows significantly and your body also goes into “starvation mode,” holding on to nutrients as body fat. Once you begin to eat an appropriate amount of calories again, the weight is quickly regained. The reality is that the quick initial weight loss is muscle mass and water, not body fat. The end result is a slower metabolism, excess weight regained, and endless frustration. The New Year is a perfect time to break this vicious cycle! One of the most popular diets around is a high protein/fat, low carbohydrate diet. Carbohydrates are the body’s most efficient and useful source of energy. This energy is derived from the breakdown product of carbohydrates, which is glucose. In particular, your brain and nerve cells need glucose to function properly. High protein/low carbohydrate diets promote the breakdown of protein and fat (while restricting excess calories from carbohydrates such as starches and sugar) as an energy source. This is a very inefficient process that leaves you feeling fatigued, dehydrated, and sluggish. This diet is enticing because the initial weight loss is usually drastic. The body uses up stored glycogen (which includes water) for fuel, producing a significantly lower number on the scale, which is simply “water weight.” A diet consisting of little to no carbohydrates is far from a long term solution. Once you inevitably begin to consume more carbohydrates, the weight and water quickly return.

Beware of these red flags:

- Any diet plan that cuts out one or more food groups that contain vital nutrients
- Promising weight loss greater than two pounds per week
- A plan that does not encourage regular exercise
- Any plan that requires food, supplements, etc. to be purchased

Instead of crash dieting, try incorporating these healthy lifestyle changes into your daily routine:

- Follow a low calorie/ low saturated fat diet
- Exercise at least 30 minutes per day five times a week
- Incorporate 15-20 minutes of strength training two times per week
- A healthy rate of weight loss is an average of 1/2 - two pounds per week
- Keep a food journal

This method may not be the quick fix you are seeking but it is the **ONLY** way to successfully shed those pounds and keep them off while remaining healthy.

Bottom Line:

You’ve heard it before....if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Lead a healthy lifestyle and a healthy weight will follow!

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