



## FAD DIETS BOON OR CURSE: A BRIEF REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Fad Diet is a fashionable and trendy diet that is popular for a particular time period with very strict restrictions of some specified nutrients. Such diet gains their popularity through television, magazine, friends and family. These diets are usually applicable for weight loss, quickly fixes the problem like magic. This is primarily because fad diets are unsustainable. As fad diets are strictly on restriction of some specified food stuff. This means when the diet is over, one is inevitably return back to their original eating style – the style that helped to put on all that weight. This review paper concluded that fad diets are really only good for helping you to lose weight quickly for a special occasion. But if you are looking for long term successful weight loss then you want to actually commit to a good diet and exercise program.

**Keywords:** Fad diets, weight loss, restricted nutrients etc.

### INTRODUCTION

A fad diet is a diet or eating plan that gains rapid popularity. They're called fad diets because they are riding the waves of a trend. So, a fad diet is a diet that is popular for a time, similar to fads in fashion, without being a standard dietary recommendation. You may be hearing about them from a multitude of sources like television, magazines, friends, and family.

There is no single definition of a fad diet, encompassing a variety of diets with different approaches and evidence bases, and thus different outcomes, advantages, and disadvantages, [2]. Furthermore, labeling a diet as a fad is ever-changing, varying socially, culturally, timely, and subjectively [1, 2] However, a common definition lies in the popularity of a diet promoting short-term changes instead of lifelong changes, and that popularity (or lack thereof) has no association with a diet's effectiveness, nutritional soundness, or safety [1-3]. The Federal Trade Commission defines fad diets as those that are highly restrictive and promoting energy dense foods that are often poor in nutrients [9,10].

Generally, fad diets promise short-term changes with little efforts, and thus may lack educating consumers about whole-diet, whole-lifestyle changes necessary for sustainable health benefits [1,2& 6]. Fad diets are often promoted with exaggerated claims, such as rapid weight loss or improving health

by "detoxification", or even dangerous claims, such as highly restrictive and nutritionally unbalanced food choices leading to malnutrition or eating non-food items like cotton wool [2,3,7& 8]. Highly restrictive fad diets should be avoided [9, 10]. At best, fad diets may offer novel and engaging ways to reduce calories intake, but at worst they may be medically unsuitable to the individual, unsustainable, or even dangerous [1, 2]. Dietitian advice should be preferred before attempting any diet.

### Characteristics of Fad diets

Typically, a fad diet shares some, or all, of the following characteristics [9,10]:

- Promises a quick fix
- Promotes 'magic' foods or combinations of foods
- Implies that food can change body chemistry
- Excludes or severely restricts food groups or nutrients, such as carbohydrates
- Has rigid rules that focus on weight loss
- Makes claims based on a single study or testimonials only.

### Types of fad diets

Fad diets are generally restrictive, and are characterized by promises of fast weight loss [3, 7] or great physical health (notably by "detoxification"), [2, 3] and which are not grounded in sound science [3].

Some fad diets, such as diets purporting to be alternative cancer treatments, promise health benefits other than weight loss [6].

Commercial weight management organizations (CMWOs), such as Weight Watchers, were inappropriately associated with fad diets in the past [5]. Several factors can cause someone to start a fad diet, such as socio-cultural peer pressure on body image and self-esteem, including the effect of media, and economical cost of comprehensive programs.

Although fad diets are ever-changing, most can be categorized in these general groups [1, 4 & 6]:

- Herbal or other supplements
- Physical or physiological testing, such as applied kinesiology and blood group analysis
- Very-low calorie diets:
  - Food-specific diets, which encourage eating large amounts of a single food, such as the cabbage soup diet
  - High-protein, low-carbohydrate diets, such as the Atkins diet, which first became popular in the 1970s
  - High-fiber, low-calorie diets, which often prescribe double the normal amount of dietary fiber
  - Liquid diets, such as Slim Fast meal replacement drinks
- Fasting.

#### **Advantages of Fad Diets**

1. Fad diets are popular because they work for a short amount of time some are for a week or half of month or a complete month.
2. Fad diets may help you lose weight quickly. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, research shows that people who lose weight gradually and steadily (about 1 to 2 pounds per week) are the most successful at keeping it off.
3. With a fad diet, one can also pay more attention to what to eat or what to not. It also is hard to keep up with the demands of a strict diet. Fad diets

often limit your food choices or require you to eat the same foods over and over again.

4. These diets are generally improving the health of participants because they encourage people to avoid processed foods and consume more plants. Though some of these diets encourage more meat eating, but the plant-based principle still applies [5].

#### **Disadvantages of Fad Diets**

##### **1. Too restrictive**

When a fad diet is followed with extreme limitations, one is opening up his body to a host of negative consequences.

“When there is strict restriction of carbs and/or fat, the body releases specific hormones to counter the restriction, promoting increased cravings of said macronutrients,” says Rachel Fine, RD, of To The Pointe Nutrition. This is because the body relies on both carbs and fat for very specific metabolic functions, and when one is not consuming any of these macros, it will fight until you can no longer resist [9, 10].

Besides majorly increasing of cravings, highly restrictive diets can adversely influence the routine of daily life.

“Subsisting on only a fraction of the calories the body needs each day can lead to feelings of lethargy and fatigue,” says Candice Seti, a clinical psychologist.

##### **2. Missing out on essential nutrients.**

A fad diet that removes one or more entire food groups will most likely result in calorie cutting as well. And while reducing calories with or without changing physical activity will usually result in weight loss, it comes at an expense.

“If this diet instructs to remove foods from your diet that are high in fiber and essential nutrients, you might lose weight, but you could end up with other complications, such as nutrient deficiencies and changes in your digestive, muscle, and bone health,” says Emma Laing, director of dietetics at University of Georgia. “Keep in mind that you will still miss out on important nutrients even if you take dietary supplements.”

In addition to missing out on key nutrients, fad diets can also cause severe health problems, some of the common adverse effects are as follows;

1. Dehydration.
2. Weakness and fatigue.
3. Nausea and headaches.
4. Constipation.
5. Metabolic disturbance because of inadequate vitamin and mineral intake.

### 3. They can be expensive.

Following the fad diets, that requires buying only premium ingredients, such as organic fruits and vegetables and grass-fed free-range beef, grocery bills are going to be steep. In addition, many fad diets, such as GOLO, recommend the use of expensive supplements to go along with the diet—and they aren't necessarily backed up by science.

“Supplements are not only costly, but also largely unproven and possibly risky,” says Seti. “Unless your goal is a lighter wallet, avoid the use of risky supplements of any kind.”

### 4. They're not sustainable.

In most cases, fad diets are not going to be successful in the long-term for your mental and physical health. A parallel goal for many people trying to lose weight is developing a positive relationship with food—and constantly having to think about what your next meal will be, or what you can't eat, isn't going to get you there.

### 5. They could actually cause weight gain.

Ironically, one of the most common side effects of fad diets is often weight gain. “This is because most of the weight loss from fad diets is typically due to simple water loss,” says Seti. “Once you begin to eat normally again, the pounds pile back on, often in amounts greater than your original weight.”

An even scarier side effect: The extreme nature of fad diets can cause your metabolism to slow, says Seti. When this occurs, your body believes itself to be in state of starvation and attempts to hang on to every calorie in a survival attempt.

### Advantage and disadvantage of types of fad diet [2,4 &6]

Types of Diets	Advantage	Disadvantage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-protein diets: Atkins, Dukan, South Beach, Zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid weight loss</li> <li>• Increase satiety</li> <li>• Improve TG level and serum cholesterol level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sustainable</li> <li>• High fat diet</li> <li>• Nutrient deficient</li> <li>• Detrimental to brain and heart</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate fat and high carbohydrate diet</li> <li>• Jenny Graig, Nutri system, weight Wafchera</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced saturated fat intake</li> <li>• Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• Significant weight loss</li> <li>• Reduction of the risk of diabetes</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low fat, very high carbohydrate diet</li> <li>• Omish Diet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible reduction of cardio vascular disease</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased TG level</li> <li>• Decreased HDL- C level</li> <li>• Micro nutrient deficiency</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very low calorie diet</li> <li>• Bernstein, Leighter Life, Slim Fast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates quick loss</li> <li>• Improved quality of life</li> <li>• Long term benefits in conjunction with exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced diuresis</li> <li>• Electrolyte loss</li> <li>• Disturbed acid base balance</li> <li>• Should be used only under medical supervision</li> </ul>

### Tips for choosing a trustworthy fad diet

To find a trustworthy diet to reach your weight-loss goals, it's key to do your homework, researching what it comes to fad diets in general.

a healthy eating plan looks like for your body and your lifestyle. While there's no one-size-fits-all solution, there are some red flags to look out for when

1. Rather than following a fad diet, or trying multiple fad diets that cause to lose and gain the same pounds over and over again, aim to consistently follow a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level.
2. Focus on variety and nutrient density, and be mindful of portions.
3. There's no quick fix for sustainable weight loss, but healthy modifications do add up. "Anytime you're making lifestyle modifications and doing something better than you were before," says Cassetty, "you will likely feel better and lose weight."

### CONCLUSION

While most fad diets do actually give you some results, this is normally only in the beginning. Most of them will help you lose weight rapidly, but it will not last longer. This is primarily because fad diets are unsustainable. As fad diets are strictly on restriction of some specified food stuff. This means when the diet is over, one is inevitably return back to their original eating style – the style that helped you put on all that weight.

Fad diets are really only good for helping you to lose weight quickly for a special occasion. But if you are looking for long term successful weight loss then you want to actually commit to a good diet and exercise program. You can even borrow some of the methodology and theories of some of the better fad diets, so long as you make sure to make a balanced eating program.

Fad dieting is one pressure you don't need in your

life. A healthy eating plan will help you feel better and give you more energy.

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