

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**1. The Atkins Diet**

Dr. Atkins revolutionized the dieting world when he introduced the Atkins diet, a low-carbohydrate eating program. The Atkins diet or the 'Atkins Nutritional Approach' is a lifetime nutritional philosophy. The diet claims that you can lose weight on a high-fat, high-protein diet. It works on the premise that a healthy lifestyle requires a limited amount of simple carbohydrates, protein, exercise and proper portion control. The diet plan works on 4 general principles; weight loss, weight maintenance, good health and disease prevention.

The Atkins diet holds the controversial belief that low fat is not the only way to go for a healthier lifestyle and weight control. Dr. Atkins blamed carbohydrates (grains, pastas, fruits, potatoes) for weight gain. He believed that if you reduced your carbohydrate intake then you would lose weight. Too many carbohydrates in your diet encourage your body to retain fat. When the body absorbs simple carbohydrates quickly, it causes an insulin response that speeds the conversion of calories to fat.

The plan focuses on the consumption of nutrient-dense, unprocessed foods and vitamin supplementation. It also restricts processed and refined carbohydrates (which make up to approximately more than 50 per cent of people's diets). It encourages you to eliminate sugar from your diet as this contributes to a slower metabolism. The Atkins diet is designed to be a programme on which you can maintain a healthy weight for a lifetime and it is highly suitable (but not restricted) to those who prefer eating animal protein. It also teaches you to control your portion sizes. Instead of carbohydrates and sugar, eaters are allowed plenty of fat and protein. This usually leads to a feeling of fullness, not hunger, so controls appetite. However, having too much protein in body can cause kidney damage and increase the risk of osteoporosis. Nevertheless, the diet can lead to high cholesterol low fibre and may lack the recommended daily values for several vitamins and minerals such as calcium, potassium and magnesium.

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**2. The South Beach diet**

With the South Beach Diet participants are encouraged to rely on certain carbohydrates and the fats. This can lead to a reduction in weight, lower cholesterol, reduction in the risk of heart disease and diabetes, and eliminate cravings without feeling hungry. Some call it the “updated version of the Atkins diet”. The diet was developed by Arthur Agatston, a cardiologist whose motivation was to improve the cholesterol and insulin levels of patients suffering with heart disease. The South Beach Diet involves a high degree of determination and self motivation. It is rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean protein, and it doesn't omit any major food groups. Its success appears to be linked to the elimination of simple carbohydrates.

There are three phases to the diet: Phase 1- eat three balanced meals a day, restricting certain foods, mainly simple carbohydrates, but eating enough so that you don't feel hungry all the time. Phase 2- eat three balanced meals a day, but reintroduce some of the banned foods and eat from all the dietary food groups. Phase 3- similar to phase 2, but reintroducing more of the banned foods and eating from all the dietary food groups.

**3. The Low GI Diet**

This diet recommends that the dieter eats foods with a low glycaemic index (GI). Foods are given a GI rating which refers to the speed at which they digested and absorbed into the bloodstream. Low GI foods don't break down in the intestines as quickly as the high GI ones, so the rate of absorption is lower, therefore the sugar is released more slowly. This prevents a surge in blood sugar levels, resulting in more stable and even blood sugar. Low GI recipes can be difficult to find but are on the increase. The dieter is required to select only foods that have a low GI index.

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**4. The Zone Diet**

This diet was created by Barry Sears, PhD. It contains 40% carbohydrate, 30% protein and 30% fat and is also known as the 40-30-30 plan. The Zone Diet's strategy calls for a return to the diets of our ancestors where meat, fruits and vegetables are the main dietary items. With this diet, the ratio of carbohydrates to proteins and fats is controlled in order to control the amount of insulin in the bloodstream. Some scientists argue that too much of the hormone insulin can lead to an increase in fat storage and inflammation in the body (conditions that are associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease), although this is not agreed upon by all scientists.

The Zone Diet does not actually prohibit you from any particular food group, however food with high fat and carbohydrates such as grains, starches, and pastas should be avoided. Fruits and vegetables are the preferred source of carbohydrates and monounsaturated fats (such as olive oil, almonds, avocados) are the ideal choice of fats. The Zone Diet claims to use food as a drug for overall good health, weight loss and prevention or management of heart disease and diabetes. However it can seem complicated and too scientific to follow and it eliminates some essential vitamins and minerals found in certain foods.

**5. The Negative Calorie Diet**

The Negative Calorie diet works on the idea that your body has to burn energy in order to digest certain foods. As a consequence, your body is actually burning fat. Take for example – an orange, which may contain 50 calories, it would take a certain amount of energy from your body to process all of the nutrients and vitamins within the orange. In doing so, you would burn more than 50 calories. However this is also highly dependent on the speed of your metabolism.

The Negative Calorie Diet claims that after consuming certain 'negative calorie foods' (like an orange), your body is left with a net calorie result which is a negative calorie deduction. So for every orange you eat, you should burn off 25 calories. This is why advocates of the Negative Calorie Diet encourage you to eat frequent healthy meals, in doing so you are actually increasing the speed of your metabolism. However, there is no scientific proof to confirm its effectiveness. The diet suggests that the following negative calorie foods should be eaten: asparagus, watermelon, papaya, pineapple and grapefruit.

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**6. The Low Carbohydrate Diet**

Low carbohydrate, or 'low-carb' diets such as the Atkins Diet and the Zone Diet work on the rationale that eating a diet that is low in carbohydrates will assist in weight loss. Carbohydrates are a vital part of our diet and provide essential vitamins and minerals. They are one of the six nutrients and are a great source of energy. Our body converts carbohydrates to calories, which the body uses as energy. 1 gram of carbohydrate will transform itself to 4 grams of calories. Carbohydrates are a readily available source of energy. Most carbohydrates are quickly and easily used by the body for energy and can be stored in the muscles for exercise. Carbohydrates are important because they help the organs in the body function properly and can assist in regulating sugar levels in the bloodstream. However, too many carbohydrates in the body can cause weight gain.

Low-carb diets work on the underlying assumption that too many carbohydrates in the body will cause the body to accumulate fat. This is because the body converts carbohydrates during digestion into sugars. Carbohydrates can be categorised as 'simple' or 'complex'. Simple carbohydrates are quickly digested and release sugar quickly into the bloodstream, whereas complex carbohydrates are harder to break down and gradually release sugar into the bloodstream. Examples of complex carbohydrates are whole grain bread, vegetables and fruit. Low-carb diets focus on reducing carbohydrates drastically. However, some dieticians state that eating a diet consisting of both simple and complex carbohydrates is necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Lesson 4: Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

### 7. The Cabbage Soup Diet

The Cabbage Soup is an all-you-can-eat-cabbage-soup diet which claims that the more cabbage soup you eat, the more weight you'll lose. The diet's so-called fat burning soup contains negligible calories so you don't have to worry about gaining weight. The Cabbage Soup Diet states that by adhering to the Cabbage Soup Diet for 7 days will result in immediate weight loss. On the Cabbage Soup Diet, individuals are encouraged to eat as much Cabbage soup and consume as much water as they want. Other foods are involved as well but their intake is severely restricted. The cabbage soup can be eaten as many times but it is not recommended that you eat soup only as it can result in malnourishment. Drinking 7-8 glasses of water a day is also recommended. The Cabbage Soup Diet's 7-Day plan is easy to follow, however dieters are asked to consult their doctor before following this 7-day meal plan:

Day 1: Cabbage soup, plus any fruit (except bananas). Drink unsweetened tea, black coffee, cranberry juice and water.

Day 2: Cabbage soup, plus other vegetables (raw, boiled or steamed) and avoid dry beans, peas and corn. For dinner, a baked potato with butter.

Day 3: Cabbage soup, plus other fruits and vegetables.

Day 4: Cabbage soup, plus up to 8 bananas and fat-free milk.

Day 5: Cabbage soup, plus up to 6 tomatoes and up to 450 g meat or fish.

Day 6: Cabbage soup, plus meat and vegetables.

Day 7: Cabbage soup, plus brown rice, pure fruit juice and vegetables.

The obvious criticism of the Cabbage Soup Diet is that it is not a nutritionally sound plan nor does it make any claims to permanent weight loss. The general consensus is that the Cabbage Soup Diet is effective in temporary and quick weight loss but is not effective for long-term weight loss.

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**8. The Mayo Clinic Diet**

The Mayo Clinic Diet was conceived 30 years ago though the origins of the Mayo Clinic Diet still remain unknown. Today it appears in many forms but one main characteristic to a Mayo Clinic Diet is that it usually contains grapefruit and is usually always high in protein and low in carbohydrates.

The theory behind the Mayo Clinic Diet is that a low carbohydrate diet plan will result in quick weight loss. It diet utilises grapefruit at each meal as a way of encouraging your body to burn fat. The Mayo Clinic Diet is usually three to seven days in duration. On the Mayo Clinic Diet, you are allowed to eat an unlimited amount of grapefruit, meat and poultry. It uses meat and fat to stop hunger, and insists that eating more fat in your diet will result in weight loss. The diet concept works on the premise that eating fat allows your stomach to feel full, which results in a reduced appetite. On the Mayo Clinic diet, you can actually eat fried foods and as much meat as you want. However, feelings of fatigue and lack of concentration sometimes occur.

**9. The Diabetic Diet**

If you are a diabetic, your body lacks the ability to store and process simple and complex sugars. Not paying attention to a diabetic diet plan can result in worsening health conditions. Diabetics are required to exercise on a daily basis, monitor their blood pressure and check their blood sugar. There are six basic food lists to draw from when planning a diabetic diet meal that comprises food in the following ratios:

2 starch/bread: 2 meat: 1 fruit: 1 milk: 1 fat

**Lesson 4:** Should we diet?

I3\_ Ten specific diets

**10. The Mediterranean Diet**

The Mediterranean Diet is a nutritional concept which states that consuming olive oil and wine will lower the risk of heart disease and will combat obesity. The diet derives its name from the countries which border the Mediterranean Sea and works on the notion that most meals should consist of mono-unsaturated fats (ie. olive oil) which counteracts the animal fats. Unlike animal fats, mono-unsaturated fats do not raise blood cholesterol levels. Mono-unsaturated fats are the 'good' fats which are required for the body in order to function properly.

Advocates of the Mediterranean diet also contend that red wine, which is consumed frequently in Mediterranean diets, is also a significant factor in reducing heart disease. Although this is not yet proven, red wine is renowned for its antioxidant qualities and contains bioflavonoid, which helps to eliminate bad toxins in the body. The Mediterranean diet consists of: high consumption of olive oil (emphasis on consuming monounsaturated fat), high consumption of fruits, vegetables, breads, cereals (such as pasta, beans, nuts and seeds), moderate consumption of fish and poultry, moderate consumption of wine (two to three times a week) and low consumption of eggs and red meat.