

From the Food Bank Kitchen

What's So Bad About Fads?

A Closer Look At Fad Diets and Their Misleading Claims

It's the beginning of a new year and many people want to try and lose weight, but sometimes busy lifestyles and not knowing how to start can be roadblocks for people. This can cause people to look for simpler "solutions" such as Fad Diets. Fad Diets are diets that claim to help with weight loss, with little to no effort on behalf of the person. Fad Diets come in many types of forms but all of them claim fast weight loss. However, these claims are usually false with little to no scientific evidence supporting these diets, and some of these diets can even be harmful to a person's health. These diets become extremely popular because they usually cause a person to lose water weight, but in fact, about 95% of those who start fad diets regain the weight back within five years. This is because of how unrealistic they are and are only temporary weight loss solutions. Below is a chart with Fad Diet claims and the reasons why Fad Diets can be bad for a person's health and possible solutions on how to properly lose weight.

Sources: [statista.com](https://www.statista.com), eatright.org, [upmc.com](https://www.upmc.com), [todaysdietitian.com](https://www.todaysdietitian.com)

Claim	Examples	Reason	Solution
Rapid Weight Loss	-Crazy for Cabbage Diet -Detox Diets	Losing a lot of weight in a short amount of time can be harmful to the body, because the loss of muscle and water. Usually Fad Diets cause the loss of water weight and not fat which causes people to likely regain the weight after they stop the diet.	It is recommended to aim to lose no more than 1 to 2 pounds per week. This not only burns fat, but helps a person's chance of not regaining the weight back. Focus on eating less and exercising more.
Specific Food Combinations	-Alkaline Diet -Blood Diet -High Protein & High Fat, Low Carb Diets	Currently, there is not scientific evidence that supports that combining certain foods together promotes weight loss. Nor has there been any supporting evidence about eating certain foods during specific times in the day that can promote weight loss as well.	There are no "wrong" combinations of foods that will cause the body to create more fat or produce toxins when they are eaten together. Be wary of any fad diets that claim certain combinations of foods cause bad health. Always question the studies behind the claims.
Quantities & Limitations	-Grapefruit Diet -Liquid Diet -Juice Cleanses -Cookie Diet	Diets that allow a person to eat an unlimited amount of a specific food, or limits certain foods or food groups cause a person to lose interest in the diet because of the repetitiveness of the meals. It also prevents a person from getting the right nutrients they need from eating a variety of healthy foods. Avoid diets that completely eliminates or strongly restrict foods and food groups.	Eat a variety of different foods from the 5 main food groups (fruits, vegetables, protein, grains, and dairy). Focus on eating lots of fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and dairy, and whole grains. Try to limit added sugars and salts, and drink lots of water.
No Need to Exercise	All Fad Diets	Being inactive has shown to be harmful to health, so it is very important for a person to be active. If a person is physically active, they are more likely to lose weight and manage their weight easier.	A person should try to implement daily physical activity in their daily routine, and it can be anything that they enjoy. If a person hasn't been physically active for a long time, they should consult their doctor to see what will work best for them. Physical activity not only helps with weight loss/management, it also helps with mental health and energy levels too.
Rigid Menus	-Raw Food Diet -Negative Calorie Diet -Atkins Diet	Rigid meal plans are very discouraging and can cause someone to lose interest very quickly. Diets do not work because once a person stops them, the weight is usually regained.	When planning on losing weight, a person needs to make changes that can be implemented for their whole life. It's about lifestyle changes that help with weight loss, not fad diets. Meal planning is a great way to lose weight, however a person should make sure they eat a variety of nutritious foods in order to stay healthy.

A Person Should Ask Themselves These Questions to Determine a Fad Diet

- Does this diet promote quick weight loss?
- Does the diet sound too good to be true?
- Does the diet sell products that the diet company promotes?
- Is there any scientific evidence to support the diet's weight loss claims?
- Does the diet categorize foods into "good" and "bad" categories?

If the person answers "yes" to any or all of these questions, then the diet is considered a Fad Diet.

Beef & Potato Salad with Smokey Chipotle

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 12 oz. stew beef, cut into 1 inch. Cubes
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 ripe avocado, cut into ¼ inch pieces (optional)
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 inch, pieces
- 3 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 small red onion, cut into 1/4 inch pieces
- *2-3 Tbsp finely chopped canned chipotle chilis in adobo sauce (Optional)

Directions

Bring 1 quart water to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add beef, garlic and salt. When the water returns to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low. Skim off the foam that rises during the first few minutes of simmering. Partially cover and simmer until the meat is fall-apart tender, about 1 hour. Remove the meat to a plate with a slotted spoon; let cool. Add potatoes to the meat broth (if there isn't enough to cover them, add water) and simmer over medium heat until tender, 13 to 15 minutes. Scoop the potatoes into a medium bowl with a slotted spoon. Sprinkle with vinegar. Coarsely shred the beef and stir it into the potatoes, along with onion, oil and chipotle to taste. Let cool to room temperature. Stir in avocado just before serving. *Chipotle chilis are spicy!

Nutrition: 1 serving = ¼ C: Calories 241, Fat 14g, Saturated Fat 3g, Carbs 13g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 453mg, Sugar 1g, Protein 13g.

Source: eatingwell.com

EatingWell Fish Sticks

Serves 4

Ingredients

- Canola oil or cooking spray
- 1 C whole-wheat dry breadcrumbs
- 1 C whole-grain cereal flakes
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 large egg whites, beaten
- 1 tsp lemon pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ C all-purpose flour
- 1lb tilapia fillets, cut into ½ by 3 inch. Strips

Directions:

Preheat oven to 450°F. Set a wire rack on a baking sheet; coat with cooking spray. Place breadcrumbs, cereal flakes, lemon pepper, garlic powder, paprika and salt in a blender and process until finely ground. Transfer to a shallow dish. Place flour in a second shallow dish and egg whites in a third shallow dish. Dredge each strip of fish in the flour, dip it in the egg and then coat all sides with the breadcrumb mixture. Place on the prepared rack. Coat both sides of the breaded fish with cooking spray. Bake until the fish is cooked through and the breading is golden brown and crisp, about 10 minutes.

Nutrition: 1 Serving=6 fish sticks: Calories 303, Fat 4g, Saturated Fat 1g, Carbs 37g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 373mg, Sugar 2g, Protein 31g.

Source: eatingwell.com

Slow-Cooker Minestrone Soup

Serves 10

Ingredients

- 6 C low-sodium vegetable broth
- 15 oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 C frozen green beans
- 1 medium zucchini, chopped
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 oz. dry whole-wheat elbow pasta
- Parmesan cheese (optional)
- 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 15 oz. kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 2 Tbsp dried Italian seasoning
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- ¾ tsp pepper
- 2 C fresh spinach

Directions:

Combine ingredients, except pasta and baby spinach, in a 6-or-7-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 8 hours. Increase heat to high. Stir in pasta and spinach. Cover and cook 15 minutes or until pasta is done. Remove bay leaf before serving. Sprinkle each serving with 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Nutrition: Serving Size= 1½ C: Calories 134, Fat 0.5g, Saturated Fat 0g, Sodium 660mg, Carbs 26g, Fiber 7g, Protein 6g.

Source: eatright.org

If you try any of these recipes and have any comments or suggestions, please contact the Nutrition Coordinators. Either email Amber (amberl@foodbankwma.org) or Mariah (mariahm@foodbankwma.org) and tell us what you think of the recipes!