

Women and Weight Loss - Fad Diets vs. Healthy Eating?

Lose 10 pounds in 5 days- that is a very tempting offer and, unfortunately, one that too many fall for every day. Fad diets make a lot of promises, but fast weight loss isn't necessarily the best way to go. Slow and steady wins the race when it comes to healthy weight loss. Here are some of the common problems with some popular fad diets:

- **Eliminating entire food groups-** Protein is definitely essential to the body, but eating only proteins can adversely affect it. Yes, protein helps repair and build muscle after exercise, but it does not build muscle by itself. And, if a woman limits carbohydrates in her diet, her body will burn the muscle proteins during exercise to make up for the absence of carbs. This means less muscle mass. No or low carb diets can also lead to a condition called ketosis. When the body doesn't have carbohydrates to burn as energy, it taps into the fat and the body thinks it is starving itself. High protein diets can also damage the liver and kidneys, including kidney stones.
- **Single-food diets** - Focusing on one single food for quick weight loss is very detrimental to the body. Popular ones involve grapefruits or cabbage and are very limiting in calories. It is impossible to get enough vitamins and nutrients from a single food in a day. Lethargy, inability to concentrate and hunger are all symptoms of this very restrictive kind of diet. Typically, once regular food is introduced into the body, the weight comes back.
- **Liquid diets and Juice Fasts** - Again, this type of fad diet is dangerous. While the liquid diets may contain combinations of vitamins and nutrients, once whole foods are re-introduced into the diet, it can cause gastrointestinal problems. This is because the stomach has become unaccustomed to digesting these complex foods. Also, the weight tends to come back once a woman starts eating normally. Juice fasts can create bigger problems. Heart palpitations, dizziness and fatigue are all side effects that accompany these fasts. The body basically shuts down and preserves calories because it thinks it is starving. Muscle mass is also lost as the body eats away at them for energy. Like the liquid diet, gastrointestinal issues can occur if whole foods are not slowly reintroduced and the weight tends to come right back.

Eating a healthy and balanced diet and adding exercise to her daily routine is the best way for a woman to lose weight. Getting the recommended daily allowance of fruits, vegetables, grains, meats and fats is definitely more fulfilling than a glass of juice. Speaking with a nutritionist can help her determine the number of calories and the right combination of carbohydrates, proteins and fats she should be taking in every day to lose the weight and most importantly, to keep it off. It may not happen quickly, but it will happen and the body will still be healthy.

Yes, fad diets help women lose weight fast, but not in a healthy way. Instead of going on a 'diet,' a woman should commit to a healthy eating plan that she can sustain throughout life instead of for a quick five-day fix. Consult Dr. Yessenow for his advice and appropriate referral.