

Fad Diet Review

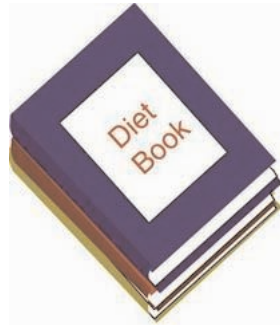
We are constantly bombarded with trendy fad diets. Whether the diet is touting the benefits of low carbs or the glycemic index, the promise is the same: quick weight loss. Unfortunately, subsequent weight gain is usually the result. Let's take a look at the popular fads and see how they stack up.

The Atkins Diet

Summary: Claims carbohydrates make you fat, so you should severely restrict them and eat mostly protein and fat.

How it restricts calories: With little to no carbohydrates (bread, pasta, cake, cookies, potatoes, fruits, vegetables), the body is inevitably getting fewer calories – therefore weight loss occurs quickly.

Caution flag: A high intake of saturated fat from processed meats, cheese and butter is not good for your cardiovascular system. A high-protein diet may increase the risk for kidney stones, osteoporosis, gout and certain cancers. You are missing out on the most healthful carbs such as fruits, vegetables and whole



grains, that improve health, blood sugar control and weight control over time.

The South Beach Diet

Summary: Uses the glycemic index to identify good versus bad carbohydrates. Needlessly restricts carbohydrate intake in the misbelief that this cures cravings and promotes weight loss. On the plus side, it encourages fruits, vegetables, legumes and unrefined grains, such as whole-wheat breads and brown rice, which are better for weight loss.

How it restricts calories: The restrictions go too far, as carrots, bananas, pineapple and watermelon are called “no-no’s.”

Caution flag: Although South Beach menus average a mere 1,200 calories, this diet claims that hunger is a thing of the past.

It also emphasizes a higher intake of animal protein and saturated fat by reducing carbohydrates.

The Zone Diet

Summary: Claims that diets too high in carbohydrates lead to high insulin levels, which prevent the burning of fat.

How it restricts calories: Restricts foods that have a high glycemic index response.

Caution flag: The glycemic index is not really designed to be used for weight control because it makes cheesecake look like it is a better choice than potatoes, carrots and turnips.

The Bottom Line

Reduce your intake of foods that are laden with sugar, fat and processed white flour. Increase your intake of low-fat, high-fiber whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans. Choose fish, white meat poultry or lean meat in small portions. Make your dairy selections as low in fat as possible. And don't forget to exercise almost every day!

By Victoria Shanta Retelny,
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Best Diet Book Choices:

- *The Volumetrics Weight-Control Plan: Feel Full on Fewer Calories* by Barbara Rolls, PhD
- *Dr. Shapiro's Picture Perfect Weight Loss* by Howard M. Shapiro, MD
- *The 90/10 Weight-Loss Plan: A Scientifically Designed Balance of Healthy Foods* by Joy Bauer
- *Eat to Live: The Revolutionary Formula for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss* by Joel Fuhrman
- *The Way to Eat: A Six-Step Path to Lifelong Weight Control* by David L. Katz
- *The Step Diet Book: Count Steps, Not Calories, To Lose Weight* by James Hill, PhD
- *Calorie Density Solution* by Robert Pritikin