

Dieting Safely and Effectively

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Abstract:

Dieting safely and effectively is not always the easiest thing to do. Using effective diet plans such as Weight Watchers and the Dash diet can help to not only increase weight loss, but also keep your body healthy. Using scientific journals, medical reports, magazines, and media I have gathered information on these diets and reported on their overall effectiveness and nutritional value. Weight Watchers and the Dash Diet are the two most effective and safest diets I have identified. Examining these two diets helped me to recognize what to look for in a good diet plan, which is the most important step in determining what diet to choose. My poster provides key points for consumers to identify when choosing the most efficient diet plan for their bodies.

Introduction:

As the rate of obesity increases, dieting today became more common, leading to a lot of misinformation. Media, magazines and even doctors are promoting new diet plans, pills and surgeries. Expenditures on dieting aids has also grown (see table one). This advertising, however, causes many bad habits, false accusations, and an overload of diet information. This is why I pose the question, which diets are most health efficient and safe for the consumer? I hypothesize that I can find diets that are the safest for the consumer and provide accurate information to help consumers diet more effectively.

Method:

I researched peer-reviewed nutrition articles, diet websites, magazines, nutrition journals and past posters done by Beloit College students. Through my research I looked for consistency within the information given, and dismissed information not from objective sources. My goal was to separate accurate nutritional information from false, unsafe diet information. I started off my research by evaluating three popular diets in the media today, and asked the questions "Why are these diets so successful? And are they safe and effective?"

Table Two: List of helpful tips for dieting that people misinterpret (1-12).

Helpful Tips in Dieting Safely and Effectively
PLAN CAREFULLY -Keep diet plan consistent to help manage and control weight and avoid fluctuations. -Set realistic goals
FOODS FOR BENEFIT -Include whole grains in the diet, because it helps to increase weight loss and prevent rebound. -Choose foods with low sugar and saturated fat
-PORTION CONTROL -Stay away from saturated fats like butter, and eat fats with omega 3 and mono-saturated fats. -Reduce calorie and saturated fat intake to increase the effectiveness of weight loss
EXERCISE: -Physical inactivity starting in your twenties is hazardous -recommended level of exercise is 30 minutes a day to keep the heart healthy, 60 minutes a day to maintain weight, and 90 minutes to lose weight.
-LOSING WEIGHT TOO FAST CAN CAUSE: -High Rebound Effect, causing weight both to return faster and to increase -Gall stones --Mood Swings -Loose Skin -Cardiovascular complications -Bone Loss
SAFE AMOUNT OF WEIGHTLOSS PER WEEK 0.5 – 2 lbs a week, more than 3-4 lbs a week can be very HAZARDOUS to your body.

Table One: A table of three common diets, the Atkins, Weight Watchers, and Dash Diets. This table summarizes plans and evaluates the benefits and health risks of each.

Diet	Diet Summary and Plan	Effects of the diet
Weight Watchers	Weight Watcher's is designed around a point system. To become a member of Weight Watchers, one pays a membership fee each month, which allows them into Weight Watcher meetings and group sessions. Points are determined age, weight, height, and daily activity. Uses the BMI to help calculate daily points also. (12)	Helps consumers learn portion control. Proven to have a low rebound effect (12). High number of participants. Objective evaluation of success was positive (12). Cost is on the order of 16.95/month with additional sign up fee of 29.95. Can be hard to maintain because of the strict point system and meal plans. Inaccurate to use BMI to determine whether a person is overweight...nutritionists now commonly use the waist to hip ratio.
Dash Diet (Dietary Approaches to stop Hypertension)	The Dash Diet is a low sodium diet based on either 1,600 or 3,100 calories. The diet plan refers to the Dash Diet Pyramid, where you calculate the number of servings per day and what is needed in your diet. Diet Plan follows the Dash Diet food pyramid. Low fat and	Helps control high cholesterol and blood pressure, especially in men. Holds high nutritional value, does not cut out necessary food groups. Appeals to many because nutritional values are consistent and effective. Drawback can be the lack of omega 3 fatty acids. Diet might be hard to maintain because the selection of food has to be nutritious and low in sodium.
Atkins	The Atkins Diets is a low carbohydrate, high protein diet. Three phases to the Atkins Diet: avoiding carbs, maintaining a low level of carbs until a goal of weight loss is met, and finally limiting the intake of carbs to control and maintain weight.	In the beginning of the Atkins diet, weight loss comes from the loss of water. The risk is dehydration, constipation and kidney stones. In children it can cause inefficient amounts of calcium, magnesium, and iron. Also, it can cause a high amount of acid in the body which leads to calcium loss from bones. Ketogenic diets (low-carb, high protein diets) may impair cognitive functions. [8]

Table Three: Dash Diet Food and Serving Recommendations
<http://campus.beloit.edu/nutrition/Dashdiet.htm>

Food Group	Daily Servings
Grains	7-8
Vegetables	4-5
Fruit	4-5
Low fat and Non-fat Dairy	2-3
Meat, Poultry, Fish	2 or less
Nuts	1

Figure 2: A chart of specific body weights. The chart shows the number of calories a certain body weight requires in a single day in comparison with the amount of activity they do.

POUNDS YOU WEIGH	RESTING CALORIES	LOW ACTIVITY	MEDIUM ACTIVITY	HIGH ACTIVITY
100	1,120	1,450	1,570	1,680
110	1,150	1,490	1,600	1,720
120	1,190	1,550	1,670	1,780
130	1,220	1,580	1,700	1,830
140	1,250	1,630	1,750	1,880
150	1,280	1,660	1,800	1,920
160	1,320	1,720	1,850	1,980
170	1,350	1,750	1,890	2,000
180	1,380	1,790	1,930	2,070
190	1,420	1,850	1,990	2,100
200	1,450	1,880	2,030	2,180
210	1,480	1,950	2,050	2,200
220	1,512	1,970	2,100	2,270
230	1,540	2,000	2,160	2,300
240	1,580	2,050	2,200	2,400
250	1,610	2,090	2,250	2,410
260	1,640	2,130	2,300	2,460
270	1,676	2,170	2,350	2,500
280	1,710	2,220	2,400	2,560
290	1,740	2,260	2,440	2,600
300	1,770	2,480	2,500	2,660

Sources: Mayo Clinic Report, volume 163 (1998) American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, volume 44 (1986 1-19)

Results:

Table One gives the results of the three diets that I evaluated. I concluded that the Dash Diet has the highest nutritional value among the three diets chosen. The Dash Diet is especially designed for people with high cholesterol and blood pressure. Its plan stays close in comparison with the food pyramid, which I have found to produce the best results in weight loss and for the human body. The Atkins diet has been proven to be the most inefficient and unhealthiest diet because it cuts out necessary carbohydrates that produce high energy levels. Also cutting out high levels of any one food group can cause deficiencies in the calcium of bones and other parts of the body. Weight Watcher's has set up a very successful program for individuals to achieve goals and consider nutritional values, plus providing a support group. The problem with Weight Watcher's is the cost, which limits many consumers from taking part in this diet plan.

Discussion:

Analyzing different diet plans can reveal certain characteristics that can contribute to better results in weight loss. In each of the diets evaluated, pros and cons were presented. Often consumers jump into diets without knowing the full effect of the diets on their bodies. For example, in 2006 the Atkins diet was a renowned diet, and was considered a miracle diet, but after extensive research done by nutritionists, the health risks of the Atkins diet overshadowed the initial weight loss. The key to weight loss is knowing your own body and its needs. Exercise is also a key ingredient in weight loss because it helps to build a strong heart and maintain your bodies health. In Table two, it lists the amount of time one should exercise at least three times a week. It is important to remember that exercise is not just going to the gym, but doing little things such as walking instead of driving short distances, taking the stairs instead of elevators, and even planting and harvesting a garden. These simple acts can contribute to the recommended 60 minutes a day of exercise.

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Figure 1: The chemical structure of certain fats in foods, Staying away from saturated fats is important to maintaining a healthy diet. Eating omega 3 and monounsaturated fats will increase diet success and overall health.

