



WELLNESS CENTER

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TRENDY OR “FAD” DIETS

With growing interest in healthy eating, we find new (and often conflicting) diets emerging quite often, making it difficult to navigate the best options. These diets typically possess at least some health benefits but may not always be sustainable for everyone. It is important to do your own research and work with a health care professional in order to make an informed decision when considering a new diet.

Ketogenic Diet (Keto Diet): The keto diet focuses on drastically limiting carbohydrates, while promoting higher fat and protein foods. Replacing carbohydrates with fats puts your body in a state of ketosis, a state in which fat is turned into ketones, which are then used for energy in place of carbs. Therefore, being in a state of ketosis burns fat stores, ultimately resulting in weight loss.

- Pros: early weight loss, appetite suppression
- Cons: “the keto flu” (initially experiencing lightheadedness, headaches and fatigue), difficult to sustain in a healthy way over a long period of time, increased intake of saturated fats

Intermittent Fasting: This concept promotes periodic fasting (typically in the morning, evening and overnight) with the idea that you will burn fat for energy during fasting and simply consume less calories per day, resulting in weight loss and improvements in a number of health outcomes.

- Pros: possible weight loss and cardiovascular benefits
- Cons: upon breaking the fast, the direction is very open ended with no guidance on types or amounts of food consumed, which could potentially result in over-eating or low-quality diet during the eating period

Gluten-Free: This diet excludes all gluten, which is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye products. It is regularly prescribed to those with celiac disease (an intestinal-damaging immune response to gluten) or diagnosed non-celiac gluten sensitivity. The claim is that since gluten *can* be inflammatory for some, following a gluten-free diet will improve a number of inflammatory conditions, with a focus on gastrointestinal issues.

- Pros: prevents inflammation among individuals with both celiac disease and non-celiac sensitivity to gluten
- Cons: restrictive of enriched wheat products, resulting in possible insufficient intake of B vitamins, iron and dietary fiber. Foods marketed as “gluten-free” tend to contain trans fats and more salt when compared to the gluten containing version of the food. This diet also tends to be less cost-effective.

Paleo Diet/Whole 30: Promotes eating only “whole” unprocessed foods, that a hunter-gatherer would have eaten- mainly meats, nuts, seeds and fresh fruits & vegetables.

- Pros: weight loss, rejection of processed foods, promotion of a variety of healthful options
- Cons: elimination of processed grains and all legumes may lead to low intake of dietary fiber and essential vitamins & minerals. Restricting dairy could result in low calcium and vitamin D intake. Most food would need to be prepared at home, making it unsustainable long-term.

If you are interested in beginning a new diet plan, please seek the guidance of a registered dietitian. To schedule an appointment, call 773-508-8883 or book online at <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/nutrition/>.