



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 what is truly best for our bodies. Many popular, often referred to as fad, diets typically have quick weight loss and/or detox promises without evidenced based science to back up the claims. Furthermore, many of these fad diets are not sustainable for everyone. Research on fad diets has shown that 94% of these diets fail (meaning the dieting goals were not achieved). It is also widely known that dieting is the number one predictor of weight gain. It is important to do your own investigation and work with a health care professional to make an informed decision if considering a new diet.

Fad Diet Examples:

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. Therefore, being in a state of ketosis burns fat stores.

- Pros: early weight loss largely related to water weight losses
- Cons: “the keto flu” (initially experiencing lightheadedness, headaches and fatigue), difficult to sustain in a healthy way over a long period of time, difficult to maintain a state of ketosis, increased intake of saturated fats which may lead to increased risk of heart disease

Intermittent Fasting: This concept promotes periodic fasting (typically in the morning, evening and overnight) with the promise of burning fat for energy during fasting and consuming fewer calories per day, resulting in weight loss. Most research on intermittent fasting has been completed on male identified subjects.

- Pros: possible weight loss (largely related to decreased intake) and possible insulin sensitivity 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 (binge eating), difficult to sustain long term.

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.

- Pros: prevents inflammation among individuals with both celiac disease and non-celiac sensitivity to gluten
- Cons: restrictive use of enriched wheat products, resulting in possible insufficient intake of B vitamins, iron and dietary fiber. Foods marketed as “gluten-free” tend to contain more salt and are more expensive when compared to the gluten containing version of the food.

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: possible weight loss
- 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.



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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/>.

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