

# Fad Diet Checklist

## Think healthy lifestyle, not "diet"

The diet industry counts on our obsession and desire to be thin. Advertising gimmicks appeal to our willingness to read one more bestseller diet book that claims new knowledge that surpasses any currently existing diet.

Recently, carbohydrate-restricting diets have been the latest rage. A quick review of history reminds us of rapid weight loss diets starting in the 60's and gaining momentum through the decade. Focused on eliminating entire food groups, the 70's brought the Atkin's and Scarsdale Diet, both of which also promoted high protein intake. Who hasn't heard of the Beverly Hills Diet in the 80's that combined foods and allowed only the intake of water and fruit for ten days? The Five Day Miracle Diet emphasized the timing of meals, while the Cabbage Soup Diet severely restricted calories by allowing only cabbage soup day in and day out.

Bottom line - no scientific evidence has ever shown that mixing foods, eating specifically timed meals, or ignoring a food group will promote good health, let alone long-term weight loss. History repeated itself in the 90's with Dr. Atkin's New Diet Revolution. It is still being talked about as a quick and easy way to lose a few pounds. Carbohydrates have been blamed for weight gain for years, yet complex carbohydrates, not the refined or sugary variety, are the main source of fuel for the body and boost the body's metabolism. By eliminating a food group, the body misses out on important and essential energy and nutrients.

So forget about dieting and start adopting a healthy lifestyle. Eat more whole foods that are high in fiber and low in fat like fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Go easy on or limit foods that are high in fat or refined carbohydrates. Plan your meals so you don't have to make last minute decisions when you are really hungry. Find a way to exercise almost every day. Joining a group or class really helps motivation and can be a fun way to meet people. Visit [www.quackwatch.com](http://www.quackwatch.com) for information on fad diets and health quackery.

*By Kindy Peaslee, RD.*

### Healthy Eating Plan

### Diet

1. Does not require fasting or "detoxing"?	Yes	Yes or No?
2. Focus on fiber intake?	Yes	Yes or No?
3. Teach new food skills for life?	Yes	Yes or No?
4. Promote long-term results?	Yes	Yes or No?
5. Increase life-coping skills?	Yes	Yes or No?
6. Teach new physical activity and movement habits?	Yes	Yes or No?
7. Focus on eating consistently?	Yes	Yes or No?
8. Focus on eating more fruits & vegetables?	Yes	Yes or No?
9. Focus on eating heart-healthy foods?	Yes	Yes or No?
10. Respect your body?	Yes	Yes or No?
11. Take notice of your hunger levels?	Yes	Yes or No?
12. Let you experience the feeling of satiety (fullness)?	Yes	Yes or No?
13. Encourages eating a variety of foods from all food groups?	Yes	Yes or No?
14. Encourages eating whole foods without purchase of special diet products?	Yes	Yes or No?
15. Provide scientific evidence rather than pictures & testimonials?	Yes	Yes or No?
16. Avoid magical tricks/supplements to burn fat while you do nothing?	Yes	Yes or No?
17. Allow enough calories to avoid chronic hunger?	Yes	Yes or No?
18. Does not make rules about combining foods at the same meal?	Yes	Yes or No?

- **2-5 NO Answers** - Run away from this fad diet waiting to happen. The red flag alert should make you aware that this new eating plan has made promises it can't deliver and you are being deprived of flexible living and eating. Instead of focusing on denial, focus on being healthier and more energized.
- **Over 5 NO answers** - Extreme eating might drive off a few pounds for now, but you are feeling lethargic and guilty. This plan may backfire and cause you to put the weight back on and then some. This diet will fail you. It's time to consider a healthy lifestyle that will bring long-term results. Focus on healthy eating and exercise from this day forward.