

# Fitness Fads and Lies

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## Lesson Five

### **Do You Know Fact From Fad?**

People are losing weight eating bacon and eggs, others by eating only grapefruit or cabbage. Some claim to lose weight in their sleep or by breathing differently. Are these diets safe and based on scientific research? Or are marketing teams using isolated testimonials to dazzle the public with a diet's reputed success?

Thousands of diet plans contribute to a \$40-billion-a-year weight-loss industry. The public wants to get thin and the entrepreneur wants to get fat with profits. Anyone can become a weight-loss guru with a hot marketing team, a few choice testimonials and a smooth presentation. However, while the weight-loss industry continues to grow, obesity has reached epidemic proportions.

Most diet plans are nothing more than low-calorie nutrition plans disguised by clever marketing gimmicks. Scientific-sounding "facts" and hocus-pocus "research" can dazzle and confuse the average consumer. Diet-plan marketers go to great lengths to explain how their diet can work for everyone, or claim that it is carbohydrate intake (or any other dieters "enemy-of-the-month) that is the culprit.

However, the bottom line is that a caloric deficit (more calories burned than consumed) causes weight loss. The average American consumes 300 calories more today than he did 30 years ago. We also burn 260 less calories each day due to increased automation, technology and sedentary occupations. Increased caloric intake and decreased caloric expenditure means that the waistline of America is growing at an alarming rate.

While fad diets may initially offer rapid weight loss, the result is too often temporary, leaving the dieter defeated, angry and often with a few extra pounds just for good measure. The problem with fad diets is that they are just that, fads. The key to long-term weight loss is adopting a healthy lifestyle *for life*.

Expert Fitness is committed to educating the public about nutrition and fitness. Using only the most current scientific research and technology, we strive to stay on the cutting edge of the health industry. Our system at Expert Fitness is a program to be maintained for life. Offering you the choices and guidance you need, our program is based on science, not marketing hype.

## **Atkins**

This best-seller claims that dieters can lose all the weight they want by eliminating carbohydrates and sugar from their diets. With the lure of eating "forbidden foods," Dr. Atkins charges that processed carbohydrates and insulin, not excess calories, are responsible for obesity in the United States. The low-carb, high-protein plan consists of between 1,200 and 1,800 calories. This calorie range would result in weight loss no matter what combination of foods (carbohydrate, protein and fat) was employed.

### **Advantages:**

Users seem to gravitate to the plan's simplicity. By eliminating carbohydrates and sugar from the diet, a significant number of calories are also eliminated.

### **Disadvantages:**

The downside to the plan is its reliance on protein. High-protein diets put the body into a state of ketosis, causing headaches, bad breath, nausea and carbohydrate cravings due to depleted glycogen stores. The plan is too high in saturated fats and too low in fruits, whole grains, calcium and fiber.

### **Long-Term:**

Information from the National Weight Control Registry indicates that high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are not maintained for life. After the initial weight loss, the dieter eventually rebounds if carbohydrates are reintroduced into the diet.

*Dr. Atkins Diet Revolution was created by Robert C. Atkins, M.D.*

## **Sugar Busters**

Similar to Mastering the Zone and Dr. Atkins New Diet Revolution, the Sugar Busters diet claims that carbohydrate (sugar) causes obesity and insulin resistance in the United States. The authors advocate the elimination of carbohydrate from the diet, claiming that one will not overeat foods high in sugar and become insulin resistant. Again, by removing carbohydrate and sugar from the diet, a significant number of calories are eliminated, creating a caloric deficit and, thus, weight loss. An analysis performed by the American Dietetic Association indicates that the menu plans recommended in the book yield approximately 1,200 calories a day. It is not the lack of carbohydrates that cause one to lose weight but rather the very low calorie intake.

### **Advantages:**

The authors recommend consuming lean cuts of meat in addition to fruits and vegetables. Regular exercise is also encouraged.

### **Disadvantages:**

Similar to other high-protein plans, rebound is inevitable due to eventual carbohydrate cravings and the unrealistic restrictions proposed by the diet.

### **Long-term:**

Due to inevitable carbohydrate cravings, long-range success is unlikely.

*Sugar Busters diet was created by: H. Leighton Steward, Morrison C. Bethea, M.D., Sam S. Andrews, M.D., Ralph O. Brennan and Luis A. Balart, M.D.*