



Tips for Choosing Weight Loss Diets or Products

Did You Know?

An unhealthy diet is often referred to as a ***fad diet***, which is designed to help lose weight quickly and is temporarily popular.

At two-year follow-ups, research demonstrates a very low success rate for many of these diets, with only 5% of the individuals who go on a diet each year keeping off the weight that they lose.

Diets come and go, and there will always be a “new” and “popular” diet that gains media attention. While some diets can be effective in weight loss and overall healthier eating, it is important to evaluate any new diet before trying it to avoid potentially harming your body.

Evaluating a Weight Loss Product, Program, or Diet

Not all weight-loss products, programs, and diets are harmful or unhealthy. Before investing in a diet product or service, check to see if the following criteria are met:

- The diet does not advise consuming less than 1,200 calories per day.
- All of the recommended daily allowances (RDAs) for vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients are provided in the diet.
- Slow, steady weight loss is emphasized, approximately 1-2 pounds weight loss per week.
- There is no list of forbidden or “bad” foods.
- Balanced food choices from all food groups are emphasized, as well as sensible portion sizes and physical activity.
- There is no promotion of specially formulated foods or vitamin supplements, especially if they are not cost-effective and not practical for long-term use.
- Those promoting the program have the proper credentials (i.e. registered dietitians, medical doctors, or other nutrition and exercise professionals).
- Information regarding potential health risks or side-effects is provided.
- The product or service can successfully fit into your lifestyle.

Remember, the goal of any weight-loss program should be to help you establish lifelong healthy habits. Effective weight-loss products or programs should encourage realistic goals and long-term weight maintenance.

Check out CSU Extension’s fact sheet: [Weight-Loss Products, Programs, and Diets](#) for more information.

