



Diets Backed by Science

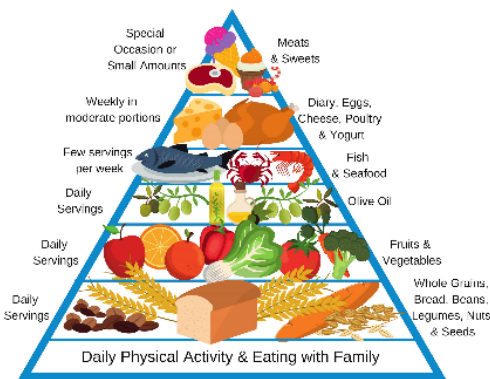
A diet is a food and drink regimen that one consumes on a regular basis. Today, it's common to think of a diet as a way to lose weight. There are many reasons why someone may decide to change their diet. Most often people change for a health reason. It could be to lose weight, reduce symptoms from a disease, or to be healthier in general. There are many diets out there and they are each designed for a specific reason. Out of all of the diets, most hospitals and registered dietitians only recommend a few because they have been studied and the research shows they produce positive results.

Diabetic Diet: Consistent Carbohydrate Diet

The Consistent Carbohydrate diet is commonly used in hospitals and recommended by many dietitians. It can be used for all forms of diabetes - Type 1, Type 2, and gestational. The goal is to eat the same amount of carbs for all meals. Therefore, this keeps a consistent amount of carbs in the body and helps manage blood sugar. This diet works well for Type 1 diabetes because the person administering the insulin injections knows how much based on the number of carbs eaten. For the Consistent Carbohydrate diet, most hospitals suggest 60 grams per meal for men and 45 grams per meal for women. One serving of carbohydrates is 15 grams, so this equals 4 servings for men and 3 servings for women.

<http://www.nmh.org/ccurl/359/512/diabetemealplan07.0.pdf>,

[https://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/root/pdfs/humannutr/Information for Unit Staff on Consistent Carb Diabetic Menu.pdf](https://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/root/pdfs/humannutr/Information%20for%20Unit%20Staff%20on%20Consistent%20Carb%20Diabetic%20Menu.pdf)



MEDITERRANEAN DIET

<https://shimacrobotics.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Mediterranean-Diet-Pyramid-2.jpg>

Mediterranean Diet: A heart-healthy diet based on the traditional diet of the countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. Most of the diet consists of fruits, vegetables, potatoes, breads and grains, beans, nuts, and seeds. Olive oil is the main fat source. There are some restrictions on meat sources. Fish and poultry are allowed 2 times a week, eggs are limited to 7/week which includes those used in cooking and baking, and red meat is only to be consumed a few times a month. The Mediterranean diet is different than others because it includes regular physical activity. Unlike other diets, the Mediterranean diet is more flexible. [https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672\(14\)00607-8/pdf](https://jandonline.org/article/S2212-2672(14)00607-8/pdf), <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>

DASH Diet: Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension is a diet designed to help prevent and treat high blood pressure without the use of medication. The DASH diet, although primarily used for high blood pressure, also follows dietary guidelines to prevent osteoporosis, cancer, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Following the DASH diet can lower your top blood pressure number by as much as 14 points. This diet focuses on vegetables, fruits, low-fat dairy, whole grains, fish, poultry, and nuts, which is very similar to the Mediterranean diet. This diet limits sodium (salt) intake. The normal version recommends less than 2,300 mg of salt, or 1 tsp, while the low-sodium version



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is less than 1500mg per day. The DASH diet is not meant to be a weight-loss diet, but many people see a decrease in weight because this diet promotes healthier choices. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/dash-diet/art-20048456>, <https://dashdiet.org/>

Low-FODMAP Diet: Stands for Fermentable, Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides and Polyols. These are sugars naturally found in foods that are highly fermentable and poorly absorbed during digestion. This diet has been used to help those with functional gut disorders, including indigestion and Irritable Bowel Syndrome. Within a month most patients notice a reduction in bloating and abdominal pain. This diet cannot cure the problems but is used as a tool to reduce and manage the common symptoms. The low-FODMAP diet provides a list of foods that are common triggers, but each person should slowly reintroduce those foods to learn their own triggers. Learn more on low-FODMAP and functional gut disorders here: <https://gi.org/topics/low-fodmap-diet/>, <https://www.acpinternist.org/archives/2019/01/functional-gut-disorders-become-clearer-as-models-emerge.htm>, <https://www.ibsdiets.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IBSDiets-FODMAP-chart.pdf>



Look out for these promises!

Rapid weight loss – About 1 lb of weight loss per week is a realistic and obtainable goal. Rapid weight loss can be bad for your health. Rapid weight loss could mean you are also losing muscle.

Restricting or removing food groups – Many rapid weight loss diets remove or restrict foods. For example, low carb diets want you to remove almost everything that is a carb. Many of these diets focus on eating more vegetables, which is a good idea, but often restrict fruits because they contain natural sugars. Fruits provide many nutrients like vitamins and minerals. Even if you are taking a multivitamin, you are still going to miss out on key nutrients if you restrict a food group. Your body is much better at absorbing nutrients from food compared to manufactured vitamins.

Promoting unlimited quantities – Be wary if a diet says you are allowed to eat as much as you want of one food. This can cause a decrease in diet quality because you need many different foods and food groups to get all the nutrients your body needs. It is possible to eat too much of “healthy” foods. Although items like fruits and vegetables are typically lower in calories, if you snack on them constantly throughout the day, you can continue to overeat.

No need to exercise – Physical activity is essential for good health. Dieting without exercise can cause you to lose muscle while you are losing weight. Try to find physical activities you enjoy. Physical activity includes much more than lifting weights and running. You can garden, hike, swim, walk, participate in yoga, pilates or martial arts, play sports, dance, even clean. It’s anything you enjoy that gets your heart rate up!

Remember, you are working on becoming healthier, and it does take time. At the end of the day, the diet you choose to follow is the one that makes you feel your best, provides a variety and balance of foods for healthy living, and becomes a lifestyle change. Be aware if you are thinking about choosing a diet that is restrictive, you should talk to a registered dietitian to learn about the benefits or consequences of following that diet.





Applying the Lesson

Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your health and popular diets. Write a short paragraph (3-5 sentences) to describe what you did and learned from the activity selected. Report your Applying the Lesson results by Online form, email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office.

Option 1: What is one diet promise you should look out for? And why?

Option 2: Why might someone decided to change their diet? What are some reasons why you are thinking about changing your diet?

Option 3: Based on the diets supported by science, what are three small changes that you plan on making to your lifestyle?

