

# Ask Dr. Tastebud



Volume 2, issue

*Dear Dr. Tastebud,*

*Over the past year I have tried several promising diets like the Atkins and the South Beach Diet. On some of the diets I lost a significant amount of weight but after I ended the diet I quickly gained it all back. What is wrong with me? Why don't these diets work for me?*

*Sincerely,*

*Fad Frazzled*

Dear Fad Frazzled,

These types of diets, better known as fad diets, rarely work for anyone, so it's not just you! The major problem with fad diets is that they do not address the issue that made you gain weight in the first place. Also, when a fad diet ends, people tend to revert back to their old habits and eating patterns. When you are on a fad diet your metabolism may slow down so when you come off of the diet any food that you consume can be stored as fat which makes you pack on the pounds!

## Spotting a Fad Diet

Fad diets are very common but most people cannot recognize the difference between them and healthy diets. Fad diets have some very noticeable signs and if your new found diet has these, watch out!!!



First off, fad diets claim fast and easy weight loss—such as ten pounds in two weeks, etc. Also, most fad diets require a person to cut out an entire food group and also requires minimal or no exercise. A fad diet does not make any recommendation that you should visit your physician for advice, but you should before starting a new diet! The calories provided by a fad diet are far fewer than what is advised by the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) in order to stay energized and healthy. Fad diets also promote weight loss without changing habits or exercising as well as involve some expensive products. These all may sound appealing but with time these statements have all been proven to be myths.

## The Bad on a Fad Diet

Upon beginning a fad diet, most people see quick results and shed pounds rapidly. While this seems “too good to be true,” it essentially will become something negative in the long run. The majority of these fad diets are not nutritionally-balanced. Many cut down carbohydrates, including whole grains, fruits, and fiber rich foods; where these foods have been previously proven to lead to a healthier, more nutritious life in ALL other cases. These diets are often difficult to follow because you are usually cutting out an entire food group, so it is important to pay attention to everything that you are consuming. On top of the facts already mentioned, fad diets aren't feasible as life-long eating plans. Any weight-loss success from the diet is often quickly met with failure, after the diet is stopped and old eating habits resume.

Presented by the BGSU Dietetics Program, School of Family and Consumer Sciences

## Atkins Diet

In your question you mentioned that one of the diets you tried, The Atkins diet, worked for a short time and then you gained the weight back. The Atkins diet restricts carbohydrates and it is thought to make the body switch from burning glucose as fuel to burning stored fat. Dr. Atkins made the argument that the low-carbohydrate diet makes the body burn more calories and also expels some unused calories. A scientific study later proved that the dieters on the Atkins diet were actually just eating fewer calories. A big problem of the Atkins diet, is that people restrict carbohydrates but they eat as much meats and cheeses as they like. Also, dieters tend to come off of the diet and go back to eating carbohydrates as often as they like.

### The Claim:

- Change one's metabolism and shed pounds quickly and easily.

### What you eat:

- High protein foods are eaten while high carbohydrate foods are limited.

### Positives:

- The thrill of eating "forbidden foods,"
  - Those not on a normal diet such as bacon & cheese (all you want)
- Also this diet is easy for people to catch on and it's popular.

### Negatives:

- It's popular
  - People may not fully understand the diet and do it based on what they hear.
- It requires counting carbohydrates
- Induction Phase
  - Which occurs in the beginning of the diet; sugar and caffeine are completely taken out of the diet which leaves people with flu like symptoms

## South Beach Diet

While the South Beach and Atkins diets are very similar, the South Beach diet has been described as a more heart healthy version of the Atkins diet. The South Beach Diet bans unhealthy fats but strongly promotes healthy ones, unlike the Atkins diet. The South Beach Diet doesn't count grams of carbohydrates it looks at how much sugars are in a carbohydrate.

### The Claim:

- Emphasis on 'good' carbohydrates and good fats. Switching to the 'good' carbohydrates will help cure cravings and assist with weight loss.

### What you eat:

- Seafood, lean meats, low-fat cheese, most vegetables, most fruits, nuts, and healthy oils are included
  - \*\*Recommends avoiding fatty meats, full-fat cheese, juice, potatoes, refined grains and certain fruits and vegetables

### Positives:

- Evidence indicates that 'healthy' oils and fats are beneficial Mostly balanced.

### Negatives:

- Restricts some vegetables and fruits that aren't 'bad' for you that provide many important vitamins and minerals such as carrots, bananas, pineapple and watermelon

## Bottom Line

The traditional diet that emphasizes having a well balanced diet with a variety of different foods is best. The traditional dieting techniques are usually very low in trans fats and saturated fats in addition to being physically active. This type of diet can actually result in long lasting weight loss, improved health and well being. The traditional weight loss method has stood the test of time—simply because it works!

