



**Often the road to weight-loss is arduous and lonely, with poor food and nutrition. To cap it all, the stay at your destination may be short before the weight goes back on. However, with thought, understanding and support it can be different - easy, enjoyable and permanent.**

Weight loss is not just vanity. Dropping a few dress sizes or belt notches is a big boost, but being slim and unhealthy is a bad combination. Many 'diets' claim, or indeed achieve, rapid weight loss. But remember, poor nutrition risks malnourishment and consequential health problems. In my nutritional therapy practice I see many clients suffering diet 'after-effects', having yo-yoed and put the weight back on, or having developed poor skin condition, joint pain, muscle problems, hormonal problems and low energy. So what regime to adopt?

Shakes, meal-replacement bars and pre-packaged foods may get the weight off, but is it what you really want to eat and what about your social life? At some point you'll have to live in the real world and will need the food selection, preparation and cooking skills to do so. Remember, there are no 'miracle' slimming pills or potions - although any restricted diet may need some supplements to ensure optimum nutrition. Calorie or point counting can trim the fat - but how tedious, and remember a virtually calorie-free packaged soup is probably virtually nutrition-free and packed full of artificial additives. Do you really want to eat like this?

Low GI diets have sound science. Carbohydrates are indeed the big sin; and glucose raises insulin levels

and fat deposition. However eat fats with caution. A high intake with hydrogenated/trans-fats is bad, but a good intake of omega 3, 6, 9's is essential for optimal health.

In my experience, the best method for permanent weight-loss is not a 'diet' as such, but a different approach to food and eating. You need to develop good habits that carry on even after the weight has come off. Whether working with individuals or small groups, I always give a clear framework of what to eat; e.g. foods to eat freely, avoid and limit, plus plenty of recipes, menu ideas and strategies for different situations.

Healthy, weight-loss may take longer, but it's worth it! Planning and enjoying your food should be a pleasure. Make it lifestyle friendly whether eating in, out, at work, in restaurants, with friends or when entertaining - there is no point in an anti-social diet. Enlist the help of friends and family and ask them not to tempt you to the dark side! Weight-loss with a friend, relative or in groups is a great way to stay on track, get support and exchange ideas.

Once you've lost weight, of course you can have the occasional indulgence - but then again you may not want to. The wonderful thing is that after a few weeks, habits and palates become re-educated and that sweet treat may no longer be so desirable or taste that good!

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