The Truth about Dieting

What is Dieting?

Dieting is not eating a certain type of food or eating a very low number of calories. For example, some popular diets may tell you not to eat "carbs." They often promise you quick and easy results.

Health Effects of Dieting

Dieting is not a healthy way to lose weight and can cause health problems. Here are some possible effects:

- Bad breath
- Yellow teeth
- Hair loss
- Dry skin
- Constipation
- Growth problems
- Delayed sexual development
- Irregular periods
- Feeling weak and tired
- Feeling dizzy
- Feeling sad
- Feeling irritated often
- Poor concentration
- Sleep problems
- **If you are pregnant, there can be serious health problems for you or your baby.**

For a Healthy Weight the *Healthy* Way:

- Eat plenty of colorful vegetables and fruits
- Choose whole grains most of the time
- Eat or drink nonfat or lowfat dairy and calcium foods
- Go lean or lowfat with your protein foods
- Quench your thirst with water, not soda
- Be physically active every day

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Why Many Diets Do Not Work …

When you do not give your body the energy that it requires, it thinks you are starving.

- Then, your body slows down how fast it burns calories.
- So rather than helping you to lose weight, very low-calorie diets can actually make it **easier to gain weight.**

If you do not give your body adequate fuel, it will resort to using its own supplies.

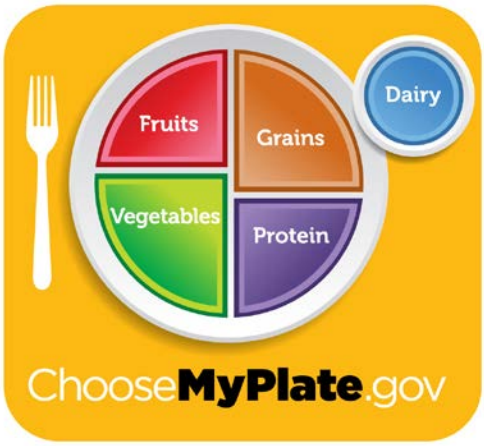
- Instead of burning only fat, it will also burn muscle tissue, which is the very thing you want to keep! Burning muscle tissue will make you feel tired, depressed, and without energy.
- You will have less energy to be active, which is one of the best ways to keep your body toned, strong and healthy.
- Popular diets are often not balanced. You may lose or not get enough of the nutrients you need. **Your hair, nails, skin and teeth may suffer and look sickly.**

Dieting often can make it harder to lose weight.

- Your body may get used to fewer calories and slow everything down.
- Trying to change your weight too often is not good for your health. It may make it harder for you to keep a healthy weight.
- **If you are pregnant, dieting can be even more dangerous.**

The bottom line: It's not a diet, it's a lifestyle!

- Keep a healthy weight by eating **balanced meals and being physically active every day.**
- Make half your plate vegetables and fruits, about one quarter grains and one quarter protein. **Use the MyPlate icon to guide you.**
- Choose foods that are high in fiber and low in sugar, solid fats and salt (sodium).
- For tips and free nutrition and physical activity trackers, visit www.choosemyplate.gov .



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