



EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM

A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

April Fool's Edition: Foolish Fad Diets

Just because it's April Fool's Day does not mean that you should be fooled by popular nutrition myths that take the Internet by storm. From biased Netflix documentaries to misinformed and uncredentialed online "nutritionists," it is easy to be bombarded with fake news regarding fad diets. Many fad diets boast fast results but fail to point out that they require cutting out entire food groups: an unsustainable and often unhealthy approach for the average person to lose weight.

The Ketogenic Diet: Let's Kill #KetoSzn

- **The Fad:** The Keto Diet is a high fat diet that severely restricts carbohydrates.
- **The Myth:** Keto diets claim to promote weight loss by putting your body in a state of ketosis, in which your body uses ketones instead of glucose for fuel.
- **The Truth:** High fat/low carb diets (e.g. the Keto Diet) give the same results as low fat/high carb diets regarding weight loss and weight maintenance. It is difficult to follow such a restrictive diet long-term and there is no evidence for long-term success. Fats contain more calories per gram than carbs and protein, so it is easier to overeat calories when following a high fat diet.

Cleanses: Don't Drink the Kool-Aid

- **The Fad:** This fad diet can range from an all-liquid diet to intermittent consumption of juices, smoothies, or supplements as meal replacements.
- **The Myth:** Cleanses claim to rid the body of toxins and improve energy.
- **The Truth:** Replacing meals with juices may leave your body without the nutrition it needs and add excess sugar to your diet. The weight lost during a liquid diet will be regained once you return to eating solid food. Most of the body's toxins are stored in body fat and will not be cleared from a cleanse. The only detoxification the average body needs can be carried out by a healthy liver.

The Paleo Diet: The Average Caveman Life Expectancy Was Only 35 Years Old

- **The Fad:** Also called the "Caveman Diet," the Paleo Diet restricts intake to food that could be hunted or gathered by our prehistoric ancestors.
- **The Myth:** Paleo diets claim to make you healthier, promote weight loss, and curb diseases.
- **The Truth:** The Paleo Diet works by restricting entire food groups, notably whole grains, legumes, and dairy. Restrictive diets are difficult to follow long-term and increase the risk of nutrient deficiencies.

The Bottom Line: Fads are Fake News

Many fad diets label certain foods or entire food groups as taboo, often encouraging an unhealthy relationship with food. Regardless of which food it comes from, a calorie is a calorie. That's elementary (chemistry), my dear Watson.

Rather than fall into the fad diet trap, strive for a balanced diet with regular exercise and consult a Registered Dietitian if you are looking for advice on weight loss and dieting.

Don't Let Fads Fool You

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<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/healthy-weight/diet-reviews/ketogenic-diet/>. Accessed on: 3/2/19. *Are keto, paleo and other fad diets safe?* Available at: <https://www.ucihealth.org/blog/2018/01/fad-diets>. Accessed on: 3/2/19. *Fad Diets Defined*. Available at: https://www.pbrc.edu/training-and-education/pdf/pns/PNS_Fad_Diets.pdf/. Accessed on: 3/2/19.

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