

FIT FACTS FOR BUSY BODIES

CONTROVERSIAL DIETS

By

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QUESTION:

I am so confused by all the contradictions about proper nutrition and how many carbohydrates, proteins and fats you are suppose to consume. Some experts say a high carbohydrate, low protein and low-fat diet is the best and some say a high protein, low carbohydrate diet is best. Then, there are any number of possibilities in between. I think I have tried them all and I am still as fat as ever! Help me!

ANSWER:

You are justified in being frustrated about all the opposing expertise about proper eating. First of all, you should question the word “experts”. What does that really mean? Just because someone publishes a book qualifies him/her to be an expert? I think you should become the expert, at least where your body is concerned. Take the knowledge and information that is out in the market and use your discretion based on your experience, the results you get and the way your body feels. But, my best advice to you is to “get back to the basics” of good, healthful, balanced eating. I think most people, unless you have been completely isolated, have a basic common sense about what that means. If a “diet” appears to be too extreme, it absolutely is!

Stop going on “diets”. Any of the popular “diets” will work to some extent, if you stick to them. The problem is, they won’t last, if you don’t stay on them. Most people don’t stay on them because they are too extreme and tedious to follow. We are humans and humans want simplicity and pleasure. Therefore, we tend to go back to our normal eating patterns that are simple and provide more pleasure in food...and then we gain the weight back.

Some diets, that are popular these days, actually slow down the metabolism because they do not provide enough calories for the body to sustain itself, therefore you work against yourself. Other diets are so ridiculous that there is no way anyone could stand to be on them for very long. So, of course, they do not last. Going on a “diet”, in general, is the biggest culprit for inability to achieve permanent weight loss.

There are several reasons that the American society is fatter than ever:

1. We continually overeat. Look around at all the “all you can eat” restaurants. In addition, other restaurants serve way too much food in a single order. No one needs to eat that much food in one sitting!
2. We eat calorie-laden foods that have little nutritional value to make our bodies energetic and well. That does not mean healthier options are not out there. It just means that people are not making those “better” choices.

3. We “live to eat” rather than “eat to live”, therefore food becomes our main pleasure source rather than something that is necessary for vital health. Granted, enjoying what you eat is important, but not for the sacrifice of health. The difference between a fat person and a lean person is that a lean person chooses a cup of fresh grapes rather than a snicker bar for snacking pleasure.
4. We don’t drink enough water. We pollute our bodies with vitamin-robbing soda pop that is sugar-laden, therefore calorie-laden.
5. Even if you don’t overeat, many people are very sedentary. Lack of physical activity, over the years, will cause weight gain, as well. The musculature becomes smaller and less metabolically active, therefore our bodies use less calories than they did when you were younger and more physically active.

The bottom line is the energy equation. “Calories in versus calories out.” PERIOD! If you overeat and under exercise, you will gain weight. In order to lose weight comfortably, sensibly, and permanently, get on a lifestyle of eating that includes an adequate amount of all the nutrients: carbohydrates, proteins and fats from the five food groups and consume an appropriate amount of food for your body. Understand that all of the nutrients have specific purposes in the body. They all contribute to good health and disease prevention. Too much carbohydrate, protein and fat are just as much of a health hazard as too little carbohydrate, protein and fat. In addition, we are creatures of pleasure-seeking tendencies. We must eat good-tasting and high calorie foods, just not all of it!

Get off the “diet” mentality and get back to the basics of balanced, nutritious eating. Stop over eating! Start cutting down on the quantity of food you eat and give your stomach a chance to get back to a normal size. Then you won’t be able to eat so much food. Find something physically active that you enjoy and vigorously and zestfully do it on a consistent basis. Once you feel the vitality, power and joy of feeling healthy and lean, you will never want to go back to being an overweight slug again.