

Weight Loss Diet Evaluation

1. Is this way of eating something you can **maintain** for life? Short term weight loss diets that you “go on” and later “go off” may do more harm than good.
2. Does it include regular **physical activity** or exercise? The food we eat is only half of the story.
3. Does it consider **calorie intake**? There’s no magic. To lose weight, one must consume fewer calories than are used. Weight maintenance requires calorie balance.
4. Does it include a **variety** of healthy foods from all the major food groups? This is important for getting all of the required nutrients and preventing diseases such as cancer.
5. Does it recognize that while we need foods from all the food groups, we should eat more from some groups than others? This is also known as **proportion**. For example, it’s best to eat more vegetables and grains than meats.
6. Does it **limit** foods high in **saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and sugar**? Studies have connected excessive intake of these components with heart disease, stroke, hypertension, obesity and diabetes.
7. Does it recognize that “one size does not fit all”? At a minimum, it should be **personalized** to fit the gender, age and activity level of the individual.
8. Does it allow for **gradual improvement**? Very few people are successful at suddenly changing habits that developed over a lifetime. It’s best to take one step at a time.
9. Does it involve **moderation**? All foods can fit into a healthy lifestyle, provided they’re not consumed in excess. The foods that we say “never” to often beckon to us. This “all or nothing” approach usually results in feelings of failure and giving up altogether.
10. Does it include at **3 meals a day**? Those who have been most successful at losing weight and keeping it off eat breakfast, lunch and supper.
11. Does it include a way to **monitor** your eating and physical activity? Keeping a diary of everything you eat and your activity level is a very powerful tool.
12. Does it require the **purchase** of unusual, expensive or hard to find supplements, herbs or food items?

If the answers to questions 1 through 11 are “yes”, and the answer to question 12 is “no”, you’re probably on the right track. There are also many other considerations such as social support. Approval from your health care provider prior beginning a weight loss or exercise program is recommended.



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