



A Practical Guide to Healthy Weight Management

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Introduction

What is the best diet for you?

Obviously, there is no 'cookie cutter' diet that is right for everyone. For a diet to work, it must be healthy and easy for you to follow.

Plus, some dieters need more personal support and encouragement than others. Remember that your personality and lifestyle are important when choosing a healthy diet. For example, if you're a food gourmet, pre-packaged frozen meals probably won't work for you. You must be able to stick with the diet long enough to achieve your weight loss goals.

This short guide will outline some common diets along with their pros and cons, plus offer you some simple tips. Remember, physical exercise is also a big part of any healthy weight management plan. We will conclude with a discussion of some popular nutritional supplements used for weight management.

Popular Diet Types

The Mediterranean Diet: Nature's Secret to Longevity and Vitality

The Mediterranean Diet has gained widespread attention as a sensible and effective heart-healthy eating plan characterized by eating mainly plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, olives, olive oil, nuts, and seeds. Eating fish and poultry is encouraged, while consumption of red meat is limited. A moderate intake of red wine is also part of the diet.

Medical studies demonstrate that dieting the 'Mediterranean way' results in a longer, healthier life. The *Journal of American Medical Association* published a 10-year study demonstrating a 50% reduction in early death rates by following a Mediterranean diet and healthy lifestyle.

Plus, over 50 combined studies published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* and affecting roughly 535,000 people revealed a Mediterranean diet lowers blood pressure, blood sugar, and triglycerides.

A University of Palermo, Italy study suggests a Mediterranean diet promotes better health and longevity. Researchers found a higher frequency of men living to age 100 or more when consuming a Mediterranean type diet.

Advocates of this diet feel it is the long-term healthy eating aspect that is most appealing. The diet is not perfect, however. Critics of this diet as a way to lose weight believe there is not enough guidance for portion control — so it is difficult to know exactly how much you should be eating. There is also continuing debate on whether alcohol consumption is healthy or not.

If the Mediterranean Diet seems a good fit for you, here are a few simple tips to get you started:

- Load up on fresh vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, and nuts. Toss lightly or sauté with olive oil, the preferred cooking oil. Replace butter with olive oil, too.
- Ditch the refined sugars and sweets; enjoy them only on special occasions.
- Use herbs and spices to flavor your food.

The Dean Ornish Program — Scientific Breakthroughs in Heart Disease and Weight Loss

Renowned cardiologist Dr. Dean Ornish looked for healthful alternatives to reverse heart disease beyond prescription drugs or invasive surgery. His quest for answers led to breakthrough scientific studies illustrating the reversal of heart disease through exercise, diet and healthy choices, which he details in his book, *Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing Heart Disease*.

Eat More, Weigh Less was the sequel to his revolutionary book on heart disease reversal, featuring many of the same concepts in his original work, but with a main focus on weight loss. Ornish is not big on calorie counting, but rather on the specific contributions to the body of the calories you are ingesting.

Ornish promotes a vegetarian friendly way of life along with regular exercise in order to lose weight and cut the risk for many common diseases such as cancer, heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes.

Here are some of the highlights of his program:

- The majority of your diet (roughly 70-75% of calories) will be comprised of complex carbohydrates, with 15 to 20% of calories coming from protein
- Eliminate all meat, poultry, and dairy products (except egg whites, nonfat milk and nonfat yogurt)

- Consume whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes in unlimited quantities
- Maintain only 10% of calories from fat

Why do people love the diet? It is recognized as a major breakthrough in the way we view managing heart disease and living a truly healthy lifestyle. Now that vegetarianism has become more mainstream, it is more accepted socially.

While this diet has become a lifestyle for many, it may be considered difficult to adopt for the meat lovers in our society. It can be considered a dramatic shift in eating patterns and mindset to fully embrace all that this program offers.

In keeping with its scientific support, Medicare recently agreed to provide coverage for this program. And in 2011 and 2012, *U.S. News and World Report* recognized the Ornish diet as #1 for heart health.

The South Beach Diet — Good vs. Bad Carbs Square Off

In 1993, Dr. Arthur Agatston's book, *The South Beach Diet*, introduced us to the idea that not all carbohydrates are equal.

It turns out our weight loss and health efforts were being jeopardized by fast release carbs explained by the Glycemic Index. Based on research, carbohydrates could now be categorized by the rate at which they release sugar into your blood stream. The foods are then recorded as high (quick) release, mid release (medium) or low (slow) release.

Guess which ones were considered 'bad'? The bad guys were the carbs that were released quickly into your bloodstream, wreaking havoc on your insulin levels and zapping you of energy. According to Dr. Agatston, once blood sugar levels are maintained, cravings go away and it is easier to achieve weight loss and a healthy body for the long term.

The South Beach Diet Program offers three phases. The first is similar to the Atkins program, when the dieter eliminates all sugar, caffeine, and carbs from the diet for a short time (approximately two weeks). Once blood sugar levels are stable, the dieter enters the second phase. During this phase the dieter begins to re-introduce carbs into their diet, focusing on low-glycemic carbs such as whole grains and non-starchy vegetables. The third phase is a maintenance program called "A Diet for Life".

According to Dr. Agatston and his philosophy with the South Beach Diet, you'll not only lose weight. You will also lower your risk for heart disease, prediabetes, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and even some types of cancer. You can also improve your blood

pressure and stabilize your blood sugar, lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol and triglycerides (fats that circulate in the blood), and raise HDL ("good") cholesterol.

While the program is backed by numerous scientific studies, other experts note that foods with a lower glycemic index are not always necessarily healthier for you as they could contain large amounts of calories, sugar or saturated fat.

Want to try the South Beach Diet? Here are a few simple tips to get you started:

Stay committed to this diet, in particular, through the first phase of about 2 weeks. After eliminating many addictive foods and beverages like sugar and caffeine, you should see an instant boost in energy levels.

Begin by adding complex carbohydrates from vegetables and whole grains in place of simple carbohydrates (processed white sugar, some starches)

The South Beach Diet has many tools and resources to help you stay motivated and achieve your goals. They feature a mobile app, weight tracking, meal planning, dining out guide, nutritional counseling, online journal and glucose tracker.

The Zone Diet — Is Inflammation Your Silent Health Enemy?

The Zone Diet was developed by bestselling author, Barry Sears, Ph.D, based on over 15 years of research in bionutrition. His pioneering work tackled the subject of weight loss and disease protection by boldly claiming cellular inflammation makes us gain weight, speeds up the development of chronic disease, and reduces our physical performance.

The main premise of the Zone Diet is its balanced approach to eating, with a macronutrient ratio of 30-30-40 representing fat, protein and carbohydrates in that order. This particular mix serves to stabilize blood sugar levels, keeping the body in the 'zone' to metabolize fat and protect you from disease.

According to a study done by Sears and Bell on the Zone Diet, inflammatory responses in the body are best controlled by maintaining two key hormone levels: insulin and eicosanoids. These hormones are responsible for the destruction they cause with obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. The Zone Diet was created specifically for the purpose of constructing an anti-inflammatory response through its macronutrient ratio and emphasis on consuming fruits and vegetables as the major source of carbohydrates compared to fast release carbohydrates found in grains and cereals.

Proponents of this diet believe the designated balance of macronutrients is perfect for healthy eating, creating mental clarity and providing good, sustainable energy throughout the day. On the other side, critics feel the carbohydrate to protein ratios is a

bit too lenient with proteins — and fear the carb level isn't enough to provide adequate daily nutrients.

Want to try the Zone Diet? Here are a few simple tips to get you started.

- Trying to weigh and measure portions can be a bit of work. To make things easy for you on this diet, start by placing low fat protein on one third of your plate. Next, add a variety of colorful carbs to the other two thirds of the plate. Last, add a very small amount of saturated fat that is low in omega-6, like olive oil.
- Don't wait too long in between meals as this will cause fluctuations in blood sugar. Make sure you are spacing meals and snacks evenly throughout the day and evening. Try to stay with 3 small meals and 2 added snacks each day.
- The Zone Diet suggests supplementation with omega-3 fish oil. Studies indicate that omega-3 plays an important role in protecting your body against heart disease and reducing plaque buildup.

Weight Watchers, Nutrisystem, and Jenny Craig — Tried, True and Trusted

Some diets and programs have stood the test of time. Having changed the lives of millions of people around the world for decades, Jenny Craig, Nutrisystem, and Weight Watchers stand alone at the top as proven programs and highly advertised trusted brands.

What do they share in common? Each has been in business from roughly 30 to 50 years, with Weight Watchers as the first to enter the weight loss market. With somewhat different approaches and meal plans, they all offer a variety of resources (membership plans, community support, food delivery, local meetings, online access) as well as two key consistencies: accountability and sensible eating advice.

Although these programs have evolved over the years in food choices and resources, their core missions haven't changed. They stayed committed to helping millions lose weight, live a healthy lifestyle, and not feel hungry while dieting.

Can't decide which one to try? Here is a brief summary that may help you.

NutriSystem Program

NutriSystem began in the 1970's as a chain of weight loss centers, and over the years has transitioned into a successful online program. Food is provided by delivery, so members don't need to make many food decisions on their own. The average user stays on the program for 10 weeks.

The NutriSystem Advanced program offers specialized programs for men, women, mature men and women, diabetics, and vegetarians. From Marie Osmond to Janet Jackson, major celebrities have enjoyed significant weight loss on this program.

Program Claims: Follow the NutriSystem plan and you will lose weight, transform your body, and curb hunger.

Program Highlights: There is no long-term contract, and membership is free. The program is sold in 28-day packages. It's easy! There's no counting calories, carbs, or points. Phone counseling is available. Dieters add their own fresh fruits and vegetables. The meals are built around the glycemic index, and variations are available for diabetics, vegetarians, and dieters over the age of 60. Calorie levels range from 1200-1500 per day, with three meals and two snacks. Exercise is recommended, but there is no formal workout plan. Online tools include a newsletter, message boards, an online diary, online classes, and nutritional advice. These are all provided free of charge to members. Plans start as low as \$8 per day.

Program Concerns: The program is easy to follow for people who don't like or have time to cook, but it's not a permanent solution to your weight loss needs. Transitioning from pre-portioned food to "real" food will be difficult for many people.

Weight Watchers Program

The Weight Watchers system was developed almost 50 years ago, and provides a tailored system for weight loss to millions of men and women. Meetings are held in hundreds of locations around the country, and are designed to be flexible and convenient. For people who don't care for the meeting format, there is also an online version that is available for a fee.

The Weight Watchers program has recently introduced a new program called Weight Watchers 360, promising to merge convention with technology for an engaging approach to weight loss. A points system has traditionally been used, based on a member's weight, age, and activity level. The goal is to eat within the points allowance.

For some people, this creates a very flexible option to choose among foods you might normally enjoy, yet the point system will make sure you only have the amount that keeps you on track for weight loss.

The most visible celebrity endorsements include Jessica Simpson, who has claimed a 60 pound weight loss since giving birth to her daughter — and Jennifer Hudson, who lost 80 pounds.

Program Claims: The company's current tag line is "Stop Dieting, Start Living". The philosophy is that a person who eats within their target points range and makes wise food choices will lose weight and reach his or her goal.

Program Highlights: Weekly meetings offer support and accountability. Web resources and tools are available for convenience, including mobile tools and apps. Exercise is encouraged, and members earn activity points for exercise. Membership based, with monthly, weekly, and annual plans available.

Program Considerations: Must maintain membership to participate. Counting points can be time consuming and can lead to obsessive behavior. The Weight Watchers 360 focuses on points, but not always good nutrition. Currently, you can join for as little as \$5 per week or a flat 3-month joining fee of \$65.

Jenny Craig Program

The Jenny Craig Weight Loss Program started in 1983. The program promotes a sensible menu, regular exercise, and a balanced approach to life. Weight loss goals are determined by meeting with a counselor. There are over 650 centers throughout the U.S. Jenny Direct is a home-based component for those who travel frequently, are not near a center, or prefer to do the program in private. Weekly counseling sessions are done by telephone.

Jenny Craig provides a weekly meal plan and pre-cooked frozen meals delivered to your door. Members select a plan based on the number of meals and snacks wanted each week.

Recent celebrity spokeswomen include Mariah Carey, Kirstie Allie, Valerie Bertinelli, and Queen Latifah. All these women have had ongoing battles with their weight and were able to reach their goals through the Jenny Craig Program.

Program Claims: The Jenny Craig Weight Loss Program helps members develop healthy relationships with food, so that they can eat the foods they want and still lose weight. Members also will learn about staying active and how it helps to increase their energy levels and establish balance in their life.

Program Highlights: Easy to use and convenient. Meals are pre-packaged, frozen, and delivered right to your door. Jenny Craig is a long-standing, respected company with celebrity spokeswomen. The staff medical advisory board ensures that the program is healthy and safe. There is good variety, with over 75 different meals to choose from. Education on portion control, exercise, and life balance is an important component of the program. The belief is that weight issues are related to lifestyle and emotions. Much educational material can be found on the company's website regarding diet, exercise, and numerous other health-related topics, free of charge. Membership currently ranges from \$6.25 to \$9.38 weekly. Packaged food is additional.

Program Considerations: The program can be expensive, considering the cost of the foods. Meetings with a counselor are not always convenient. The program is difficult to follow without the pre-packaged foods, and it can then be difficult for members to transition to "real" food.

Must-Know Nutrients for Optimal Weight Management

No discussion about achieving and maintaining an optimal weight would be complete without reviewing some of the nutrients that are gaining scientifically-demonstrated backing for their weight-lowering effects.

While there are numerous potential nutrients out there, this guide will review some information about a handful of the most promising ones:

Chromium – The Weight Control Mineral

Chromium is a trace mineral your body needs to synthesize protein and metabolize glucose. Chromium helps stabilize blood sugar levels and control insulin production. Research also suggests that chromium can play a role in weight control.

Chromium dinicotinate glycinate, or CDG, binds the mineral chromium to nicotinic acid, also known as niacin, and the amino acid glycine. While some supplements contain chromium picolinate, evidence suggests that chromium nicotinate compounds are more bioavailable than other chromium compounds. Additionally, chromium dinicotinate contributes to the production of glucose tolerance factor (GTF), which may assist in the metabolism of fatty acids and carbohydrates.

Some research indicates that chromium dinicotinate supplementation could improve blood sugar control among diabetics and those at risk of developing diabetes. Plus, supplementing with chromium dinicotinate may promote weight loss, improve athletic performance, and enhance energy.

After eating, your body secretes the hormone insulin, which helps transport glucose to your body's cells in order to provide energy for proper cell functioning. Scientists speculate that chromium stimulates the activity of insulin, increasing the metabolism of fat and glucose. Some researchers claim that the improved insulin efficiency also leads to increased production of serotonin, which subsequently reduces appetite. Yet another hypothesis is that chromium helps regulate the production of fat in the body, preventing excess fat from forming.

Raspberry Ketones – The Fat Burning Fruit Extract

Raspberry ketones are natural compounds which give raspberries their unique flavor and aroma. Ever since they were discussed on TV's The Dr. Oz Show, raspberry ketones have become difficult for consumers to find due to their widely increasing popularity when used for weight loss.

Emerging research indicates that these compounds may lead to fat loss and regulation of metabolism, particularly when combined with a proper diet and exercise. So far, the

evidence is limited and only involves animal studies, but researchers have noted that raspberry ketones do show promise in helping burn fat much more efficiently.

In one recent study, researchers discovered that raspberry ketones decreased the amount of fat in the abdomen and liver of mice. Plus, they significantly increased the breakdown of fat in rat fat cells.

There was another significant finding in this study related to metabolism. Adiponectin is a protein the body uses to regulate metabolism. Higher levels are associated with fewer fat stores. Scientists studied the effects of raspberry ketones on fat cells and noted an increase in adiponectin secretion when compared to a control group. In this particular study, scientists concluded that raspberry ketones prevent and reduce obesity and fatty liver, at least in these animal subjects.

Another study demonstrated that raspberry ketones activate brown fat thermogenesis and enhance energy metabolism. Brown fat is a unique form of fat that generates heat and burns calories (as opposed to ordinary white fat, which stores fat).

Other studies from Asia indicate that raspberry ketones, because of their chemical similarity to capsaicin, the heat-generating chemical in chile peppers, could help burn body fat, particularly fat in the liver. This could lead to decreased cholesterol, increased insulin sensitivity to insulin, and weight reduction.

And if you're thinking you could just eat raspberries to get the benefits of raspberry ketones, unfortunately, this won't work. According to The Dr. Oz Show, you'd have to eat 90 pounds of raspberries to get the benefit you'd get from a dose of raspberry ketones!

Green Coffee Bean Extract — Lean, Green, Weight Loss Machine

Green coffee beans are simply coffee beans that haven't been roasted. Roasting gives coffee its tasty flavor, but unfortunately, it eliminates chlorogenic acid from the beans. Scientists now believe this compound, a polyphenol antioxidant, is primarily responsible for the weight loss benefits of green coffee bean extract.

Coffee contains hundreds of chemical compounds, each of which may exert effects on the human body. Some researchers believe that caffeine may also play a small role in weight reduction due to its stimulant properties. However, chlorogenic acid does appear to play a significant role in weight loss and reduced risk of glycemic disorders such as diabetes. Researchers hypothesize that chlorogenic acid may cause weight loss by lowering the absorption of fat and glucose in the gut, and reducing insulin levels to improve metabolic function.

In one recent study, overweight or obese participants lost 10% of their body weight using green coffee bean, with an average weight loss of 17.5 pounds over 22 weeks. In

presenting this study at the world's largest scientific society, Joe Vinson, Ph.D. reported that "based on our results, taking multiple capsules of green coffee extract a day — while eating a low-fat, healthful diet and exercising regularly — appears to be a safe, effective, inexpensive way to lose weight".

If you decide to try a green coffee bean supplement, make sure it contains chlorogenic acid, which can be listed as Svetol.® or GCA® (green coffee antioxidant).

Green Tea Extract — Better Than Drinking It

Green tea is the least processed of the 3 primary types of tea — green, black, and oolong. This minimal processing of green tea helps preserve its high levels of polyphenol antioxidants, particularly catechins.

You may not have heard of EGCG or epigallocatechin, the main active polyphenol in green tea. However, research indicates that the EGCG and caffeine in green tea increases the amount of calories your body burns at rest. Even the National Institutes of Health states that taking green tea extract (EGCG) seems to help moderately overweight people lose weight.

There is also some evidence to suggest that the compounds found in green tea may be beneficial in heart health, blood sugar regulation, and even help suppress the growth of cancerous tumors.

And while drinking green tea offers some health benefits, you'd have to drink quite a bit of it to get a noticeable thermogenic or fat-burning effect. On the other hand, a high quality green tea extract can provide 3 or 4 times as much EGCG as a single cup of green tea.

Black Pepper Fruit Extract — Absorb More, Burn More

Of course, you know black pepper as a common food spice and seasoning. But dried ground pepper has been used for thousands of years as a health remedy, particularly in the healing practice of Ayurveda. Many Ayurvedic formulas include black pepper to help in the digestion and absorption of vital nutrients.

The spiciness of black pepper is due to the chemical piperine, which acts as a thermogenic compound. The process of thermogenesis increases the body's basal metabolic rate to burn more fat. Piperine has been found to enhance the thermogenesis of fat by accelerating energy metabolism in the body.

Of course, adding more pepper to your food is not a bad idea. However, using black pepper extract is the only way to get a significant benefit from piperine.

BioPerine® is the only product sourced out of piperine from black pepper fruit to obtain a patent for its ability to increase the bioavailability of nutrients. Additionally, it is the only form of piperine to have undergone clinical studies in the U.S. to substantiate its safety and efficacy for nutritional use. These studies demonstrate that BioPerine® significantly enhances the bioavailability of different supplement nutrients through increased absorption.

This is very critical to health because, as experts say, “it’s not what you eat that’s important, it’s what you absorb”.

Final Thoughts

I hope this short guide has given you some practical advice when it comes to choosing a healthy diet and the best natural supplements for lifetime weight management.

Remember — the best diet for you is the one you can follow as you both reach and maintain your weight goals. Plus, it should support your good overall health, not deprive you of vital nutrients. And don’t forget to stay active, for your heart, lungs, and weight!