How do you know if it's a fad diet?

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If you have been searching for the promised land of diets then you might be a prime target for a fad diet. Going on a diet may be one of the unhealthiest choices you can make. Why? Let's begin by defining a fad diet. Here are some things to look for:

Promises rapid weight loss: Any diet that promises you'll lose more than two pounds per week is likely a fad diet. It is considered safe to lose one to two pounds per week. People that lose large amounts of weight quickly, often gain the weight back --plus a few more pounds. Losing weight more slowly gives your body a chance to adjust and "own" that new number. According to the "set point theory", your body is destined to be within a certain weight range. Interpretations of this theory vary, but one thing is clear. If you're body does not maintain a weight range for an extended period of time, then this weight is not true. Losing weight more slowly is safe, effective and will stand the test of time.

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Eliminates a food group: If your new diet has you cutting out a food group entirely (or almost entirely) you've spotted a fad diet. The body requires fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins and fats. Without any one of these things your body will suffer greatly. Fruits and vegetables provide water, fiber and antioxidants. Carbohydrates are the fuel your body needs. Proteins build and repair cells. Fats are necessary to absorb certain vitamins and protect and insulate the body's organs. And we're just scratching the surface about what each of these foods do for the body.

Claims that fruits or vegetables could be fattening: Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and not the enemy! A diet that includes several servings of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis is key to weight loss.

Requires you to purchase pills and special prepared foods: It is unrealistic and unhealthy to take pills that curb your appetite or block the absorption of fat. It is also costly and unhealthy to eat large quantities of processed foods. Ideally, we should eat as much fresh food as possible. Our bodies are not designed to deal with the toxins that result from the consumption of processed foods. These toxins are difficult to eliminate when on an unhealthy diet. They create weight gain and a toxic condition that leads to illness.

So what should we do to lose weight without going on a fad diet?

- Eat a variety of foods
- Eat small, frequent, healthy meals
- Do not overeat
- Limit consumption of fatty animal products
- Stay away from processed foods
- Enjoy your favorite treats only occasionally (such as cakes and cookies that are not made with fresh, healthy ingredients)
- Experiment with different foods and spices to keep eating interesting

Make healthy choices as often as possible and watch as your body and mind become stronger and healthier. Enjoy the leaner body that avoiding fad diets will afford you.