

Diet “Fads” Research

From Week 6 of the January 2014 Challenge

Acai Berry Diet - Laurie Nunez

"The Sleeping Beauty Diet" - Consistently getting a good night's sleep has been proven to help weight loss. However, some people have taken this idea to the extreme by sedating themselves for days. Elvis was known for being a big fan of this fad diet, which possibly contributed to his death."

Ok, seriously, the fad diet I looked into is the Acai Berry Diet.....because if I had had the money at the time, I probably would have tried it.

Antioxidant-rich acai berries are believed to have anti-aging effects, making them a prime candidate for “magic” pills and potions. Be wary of any products that extol the weight loss benefits of this wonder berry—no rigorous studies have proven they help.

Yes, the acai berry has beneficial antioxidant effects and has anti-inflammatory properties, "On the other hand, the claim that the acai berry is good for weight loss seems to be groundless. “There is no literature in the scientific journals about weight loss and the acai berry,” Porter says. That part of the acai berry story appears to be just another diet scam.

Beyond just the lack of weight-loss stimulus, a recent statement by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, a watchdog group, warned consumers not to sign up for free trials of acai diet products online because of complaints about unauthorized credit card charges after the trial is over." yikes!!

So it seems we are all finding the same answers.....eat right, get moving, and be healthy!

Advocare - Kelly Radank

I decided to do my research on Advocare, because I have a few friends who swear by it. With any sort of pyramid scheme product, I always find it interesting that not just one product will do what they claim, they offer multiple and each one does something different. And you MUST take all of them to get the desired results. I started trying to count how many products they offer, and lost track at 46.

What is Advocare? Advocare is a concoction of Energy Drink Mixes, Cleanses, and Meal replacement shakes, of course all claiming to be “healthy” and rich in nutrients. But after deeper research of the ingredients used, it is anything but.

Ingredients

In Herbal Cleanse tablet:

Vitamin A (as beta-carotene), Vitamin C (as ascorbic acid), Sodium, fructose, Probiotic Culture - (Lactobacillus acidophilus...

These first few ingredients sound good at first. Vitamins A and C, which are important for our bodies. Why, then are they in parenthesis and named something different. So I did some deeper research into what these different named vitamins are. They are Synthetic, laboratory made Vitamins. Not the kind God gave us naturally. Here is some information I found regarding ascorbic acid (AKA Vitamin C, or so they want us to think).

Despite popular belief, they are not structurally identical. Ascorbic acid does not grow on trees or plants. It cannot be grown on a farm. It is produced in a laboratory and is an artificial reduced form of the natural

Vitamin C. One analogy to help you understand this is if you compare Vitamin C to an egg, ascorbic acid would be just the egg shell with nothing inside.

How is ascorbic acid made?

Well it starts with corn syrup (that clear syrup that is nothing but refined pure corn sugar).

I didn't even need to read any further. How is this even considered a vitamin when the first part of the process in its production is Corn syrup. Your guess is as good as mine, but it is "oh, so good for you". (Said with dripping sarcasm). Sadly this is just one of the ingredients that I researched. Almost every one of their products has "Natural and Artificial Flavorings", fructose, and Sucratose.

Here are a few other things that made me scratch my head. The Herbal Cleanse product has a few warnings on the label.

Herbal Cleanse

For ages 18 and older. (Seriously??)

Follow the instructions included with each Herbal Cleanse system to carefully consume the correct products each day.

KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.

In case of accidental overdose, seek professional assistance or contact a poison control center immediately. (SCARY)

Do not take thermogenics (MNS™ color packets, ThermoPlus® and AdvoCare Slim®) when using Herbal Cleanse. All other AdvoCare products may be continued but should be taken several hours after consuming Fiber Drink.

This is crazy! If these products are so natural, then why do they have a warning of accidental overdose, and to call poison control in case of said overdose.

From some people who have done an intense study of Advocare I found the following statements:

Advocare is not healthy. There is no quick fix to becoming healthy or losing weight, and you literally could not pay me to ingest these products.

The only way to lose weight and keep it off is to eat well, to eat real food, and to give your body what it needs. Like I said at the beginning of this article, we eat well, we take care of ourselves, we take pride in our bodies and we love ourselves enough not to pollute our bodies with toxic ingredients.

- See more at: [http://ancestral-nutrition.com/an-unbiased-review-of-advo.../...](http://ancestral-nutrition.com/an-unbiased-review-of-advo.../)

The supplements included in the "cleanse" phase are quite simply glorified laxatives. Will this reduce your overall body weight? Sure...anything that purges your body of water will reduce your overall body weight. However, these supplements can create electrolyte imbalances within your body that can lead to serious complications, like a heart attack.

Any program that advocates the consumption of energy drinks should be considered potentially dangerous. The ingredients in energy drinks are NOT regulated by the Food and Drug Administration, and contain artificial ingredients and stimulants. Last I checked, these particular foods are not considered to be a part of a "healthy" meal plan!

The good thing about the meal is the emphasis on lean protein, complex carbs, and non-starchy vegetables. The bad thing about the meal plan is its lack of dairy and fruit, which fall far below the number

of daily servings recommended by most nutrition professionals. No amount of supplements can replace the natural vitamins and nutrients you get from these foods.

Those are my complaints as an RD; however, there are other warning signs that everyone should know. Numerous reports are popping up online in different forums warning other consumers about the safety of these supplements. People are reporting severe health complications such as gastric pains that require hospitalizations, organ failure, and adverse medication interactions. One of my own corporate wellness clients experienced a very serious medical scare while participating in the 24-Day Challenge. Not only did her blood pressure spike significantly during the program, but she also experienced kidney failure despite having no previous risk factors or pre-existing medical problems. Her doctor immediately told her to stop the supplements, and luckily her kidney function and blood-pressure levels were moving back toward normal after two weeks.

So there it is folks. I found these rules to consider before starting any sort of supplement, and I think they are wise and great advice.

1. If the claim of the program sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
2. Supplements will NEVER replace the nutrient content of whole foods!
3. Save your money and put it toward your grocery bill. Stock up on the healthy foods your body needs and you'll be just fine.

Advocare - Amy Reese

I have I had a few present Advocare to me either via Facebook or personally just in the past couple of months. I did not realize they have so many different products however so I decided to concentrate on just the Herbal cleanse which is their first step in the 24 day JumpStart challenge they promote. Here is what their website says about it and the ingredients in each of the cleanse products.

The AdvoCare Herbal Cleanse system can help rid your body of toxins and waste with its unique blend of herbal ingredients.* Using a systematic approach, this 10-day system guides you daily through the steps for thorough internal cleansing and improved digestion.* Herbal Cleanse supports the body's metabolic systems and general health during the detoxification process by helping keep energy levels up, aiding in removing impurities, and supporting the immune system.* Some people who use Herbal Cleanse for the first time experience an encouraging reduction in pounds and/or inches when they pair the system with recommended diet and exercise.* Each Herbal Cleanse system includes these three key products: Fiber Drink, ProBiotic Restore™ ULTRA, Herbal Cleanse tablets.

Key Benefits

- Helps rid the body of toxins and waste*- Supports improved digestion and thorough internal cleansing*- Provides 10 grams of fiber per day- Helps remove impurities from the body*- Supports healthy weight loss*

Directions for Use:

For ages 18 and older.

Follow the instructions included with each Herbal Cleanse system to carefully consume the correct products each day.

It is important to consume a well-rounded, healthy diet while taking Herbal Cleanse. Drink clear liquids such as water, herbal teas and diluted fruit juices. Follow a diet rich in whole, fresh fruits and vegetables with light lunch and dinner options. Avoid fried, heavy foods, junk food and fast food. In fact, following

these healthy eating habits for 10 days may encourage you to continue consuming healthy foods. Continued, sustained weight loss comes from changing eating and exercise habits. Improving overall health and well-being requires a continuous commitment to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Ingredients ^[06]

In Herbal Cleanse tablet:

Vitamin A (as beta-carotene), Vitamin C (as ascorbic acid), Sodium, fructose, Probiotic Culture - (Lactobacillus acidophilus...

In ProBiotic Restore™ ULTRA:

Probiotic Culture: Lactobacillus rhamnosus, Lactobacillus acidophilus, Lactococcus lactis ssp. Lactis, Bifidobacterium bifidum, Bifidobacterium longum, Lactobacillus delbrueckii ssp. Bulgaricus and Streptococcus thermophilus, fructooligosaccharides.

In Fiber Drink:

Fiber blend, both soluble and insoluble, including: gum acacia, guar gum, cellulose, oat bran, fruit pectins and psyllium seed

\$31.50 per box (10-day system)

Distributor \$25.20 Advisor \$18.90

While they do give a bit of a disclaimer saying you should eat right and exercise, these products were presented to me as being all natural. Every single one of the the products just for this 10 day cleanse has a form of processed sugar, is that all natural? Just by researching some of the ingredients it seems to me you can get the same effects by eating yogurt and veges and not have all that processed sugar. Wouldn't that be more beneficial for a healthy body?

Advocare - Rebecca Williamson

We have several friends and lots of Facebook friends who have tried to get us to buy in to the AdvoCare hype. This is why I wanted to research this one. My husband and I talked about it a lot because a friend at church was so bent on "wearing us down" to use these products.

Upon investigation, they claim to be full of vitamins and minerals, but there are many unpronounceable ingredients as well. We had 2 complaints that were never answered properly: 1) Since ALL customers are "required" to eat healthy with a journal as well as exercise, how do you know it's not just a change of a healthy lifestyle that aids in weight loss? and 2) How is it healthy to rely on caffeine to get everything done you need to get done? (SPARK drink) For instance, we have friends who post constantly things like, "ugh, this is going to be a 2 Spark day, or maybe even 3, I can already tell..." This caffeine enhanced drink is scheduled in a customer's routine TWICE daily! This is recommended to take the place of coffee, but my concern is putting things in the pills and drink that are chemicals, and would there still be striking results without the lifestyle change as well?

We have always been firm believers in eating healthy and exercising as the way to lose weight, keep it off, and live. We have NOT done these things, but it is the healthy way at any rate.

Upon further investigation, I have found interesting claims on the business side, as well as marketing faux pas, but I believe my focus is on the nutritional value. It seems to me that this group has proven that the weight can be lost and maintained without the use of the supplements, for which I am grateful. It costs

more to eat healthy? Well, I would disagree. If you eat unhealthy, it costs more in the future: weight loss gimmicks, medical bills, gym memberships, etc.

My finding is this: by consuming the vitamins in your diet, the use of supplements are deemed unnecessary.

All Fad Diets - Tammy Lee

Fad diet research, well sort of...

Like most of you, I have done the fads and I have done things right. Whether it's been a fad or healthy changes they don't last because of one major problem. It was a temporary change to lose pounds not to change for life. It was restrict food now only to scarf it down later. Buy offs like being "good" for a week only to be a maniac and eat enough for an African country! Because I wanted a temporary result, not to change how I use/abuse food. I can cut down the fad, and I can AMEN the testimony of them never working; but in truth, nothing will work unless it's a daily commitment for a changed lifestyle. A change in how I see my body, how I see food, and the future I want to see.

The idea of choose your hard. It's hard to say no when you smell it or see it or have some rationalization on why it's ok. It's hard to feel "left out" or that it's a lot of time and work. It's hard to step up and keep going when you're results are akin to a snail's pace. But it is also hard to have diabetes for years, and expensive too. It's hard to think your husband will be pushing you in a wheel chair due to an amputation from diabetes. It's hard to go thru therapy after a stroke. It's hard to walk upstairs or chase the kids around when you're unhealthy. That's why I say it's a "choose your hard." The fads are easy. Making a life altering, behavioral change is hard and a longer process. But it's the hard I choose while I am still able to make the choice.

Alli - Jamie Mock

I began my research by looking into appetite suppressant prescriptions. This led me to the over-the-counter "Alli." It was largely promoted and sold by Walgreens a couple of years ago. In beginning my reading, I immediately saw the opening statement that read, "If you're overweight, and dieting and exercise haven't worked for you, talk to your doctor about a weight management program that involves medication." I was absolutely dumbfounded by that statement. This medicine is 1/2 the dose of the prescription Xenical, which is what allows it to be sold over the counter. It works by blocking some of the fat absorption in your body. An astronomical 91% of people who have taken Alli have suffered a side effect (usually loose, oily stools). However, by the 4th year, this decreased to 36%, so one hopefully only has to endure 3 years of these gastrointestinal issues before they subside (read with sarcasm). Some of the stated cons are that people who took them medication for over a year typically only lost 5% of their weight. Also, a high percentage of them had damage to their kidneys. And, finally, after stopping the medication, most all gained their weight back. The one listed "pro" is that if this medication is taken ALONG WITH A LIFESTYLE CHANGE, then it could be successful.

Apidex - Alicia Taylor

Adipex is a prescription weight loss drug that my doctor talked me into taking while I was in college. And it worked....For a time! Adipex is a stimulant that suppresses your appetite and increases your metabolism so you lose weight.

As you Research this drug, you see all this information about this helping you "kickstart "your weight-loss when used with a diet and exercise plan. Which it does, but doctors rarely set you up "with a weight-loss plan!" It is used more as a quick fix, and sets you up for failure after you have to stop it. It is unsafe to use

for a long period of time, so once you stop taking it, you gain all that weight right back and then some frown emoticon

There are also long term medical conditions like irregular heartbeat, heart valve problems, and mental disorders that can result from taking this drug. It does nothing to help you change your unhealthy lifestyle.

Atkins Diet - Cindy Beeman

1. I have tried the Atkins Diet. My findings while being on it:

-Left me so hungry that it didn't take me long to crash it.

-Carbs done the right way are not bad for you. God designed your body to have a well balanced diet. There is certain things your body needs to keep going.

2. The so called South Beach Diet. My findings again:

-The food you can buy in the stores to follow the diet, do not taste as they promise. I never found any of them tasting great.

-I am one that likes my food to taste like food, not chemically enhanced.

Being on this challenge has taught me a lot.

1. How to eat the right foods, and fix them in a healthy way that still taste great.

2. Discipline on:

-Exercising on a daily basis

-How to stop eating myself to stuffed and late at night.

-How to have a cheat day, but keep it to a cheat meal.

3. That I can do this, and having a support group to encourage me to keep going when it gets rough or over my victories is a great way to keep on track.

4. Having accountability is not a bad thing.

5. I am liking how I look, and it keeps getting better.

Atkins Diet - Tiffany Delp

I've personally tried the Atkins diet and had amazing, but short term results. Basically, you cut out pretty much all carbs except for those in vegetables (excluding starchy veggies) for the first 2 weeks, then you begin to introduce healthy carbs back into your diet until you stop losing weight. This gives you an idea of what your carb limit is. The problem with this diet is not only the limited food choices, but also the fact that to maintain, you basically have to follow this for the rest of your life! And I did NOT have the willpower, or motivation to do so. I lost around 12 pounds my very first week, and got to a weight that i hadn't reached since middle school. After about a month of this, I had lost a total of 23 pounds. My husband and I went out of town for a long weekend, and I did indulge a little. When we returned home, I was anxious to get back on the scales and see what the damage was. In just 3 days i had gained back 8 pounds!! Although this diet doesn't encourage special supplements, or shakes, and is virtually free (no meetings, special foods, etc.), it is really not possible to maintain this as a lifestyle. I have many friends that have lost lots of weight doing this diet, but not one has managed to keep it off.

Atkins Diet - Kim Fischer

I think I am a lot like others who have tried every diet known to man...even starvation...I want to talk about the Atkins diet...it lets you eat large amounts of fat in your diet...the downfall for me was fat causes sugar to rise as a diabetic my sugar went through the roof....I believe it's best to eat more clean and natural...moderating...eating more veggies and real foods...with any plan a person needs to follow a maintenance at the end or you will fall into your old routines and gain it all back.

Atkins Diet - Naomi Heard

1. It is a low carb diet, as most already know. Problem? WE NEED CARBS!! Carbs give you energy, feed your brain, and give you a sense of satisfaction. True, we don't need as many carbs as some would like to consume, but we do need carbs.
2. High protein causes constipation, which leads to the need to use laxatives. Consistent laxative use is certainly not good for your body. If a person eats right the chances of needing laxatives are few and far between.
3. You will lose weight on this kind of diet, but you may lose your health in the process too, due to lack of nutrients your body needs from all the foods we are supposed to eat.
4. This diet leaves you feeling deprived. Which means you cannot stay on this diet, and when you get off of the diet you will gain back the weight plus some, due to feeling deprived while you were on the diet.

Atkins Diet - Sarah LeClerc

This was a personal experience for me. My husband, my dad and my in laws have all done this diet and have lost an incredible amount of weight. The main problem is that you would not be able to tell it today. My husband lost over 50lbs when he participated and just a few months ago weighed in at the most he has ever weighed. My dad and my mother in law are both the largest they have ever been also. So, needless to say I was already disgusted with this diet. The main thing that really bothered me was how much meat is consumed on a daily basis. I read over 10 doctors reports (and there were plenty more) that stated that any diet that would allow you to have all the meat you wanted was insane. (one doctor actually used the word insane) Other findings were that it is not healthy to eliminate all carbs from our diet. On a personal note, I hate that you have to give up your fruit. Fruit was given to us by God, and now in our family is the way we have "sweets." This challenge has changed my husband and I's mind set towards food. It has taught us portion control, self discipline and the importance of exercise. I will forever be grateful for FIT!

Atkins Diet - Serena Perry

I think that the biggest red flag to me is pulling an entire food group out of your diet; just doesn't seem healthy to me.

Another thing that I noticed was cutting out an important food group like carbs would not be something I would be able to do long term. I could moderate my carbs, but cutting them out could not possibly be a lifestyle change for me.

The high fats and high protein concept would not be something your body can sustain. Your liver needs a proper balanced diet to function well, and the Atkins diet would not be its friend. The diet is not focusing on true health for your entire body. From documentaries I have been watching lately about food, one common theme is we need to focus on getting our insides healthy, and our outside will reflect that. The Atkins diet does not truly seem to support this idea.

Atkins Diet - Juli Turner

In high school, I did the Atkins diet several times. I dropped weight quickly...really quickly. That was great!! There were two problems.

1. I didn't keep it off.

Eventually, I would go back to my old eating habits and gain back. It was very frustrating.

2. I was such a witch while on it!

Avoiding carbs did something to my brain. My family HATED when I did Atkin's . I was truly mean! When I got married, my mom told Josh, "Never let her go on Atkin's. You will hate her!" Haha!

Atkins doesn't give you long lasting results. One can't cut out an entire section of nutrition. Every part (in moderation) is important! We need carbs, fats, protein, and yes occasionally sweets.

In conclusion, the only lasting results you can have is not in a diet. It's in a lifestyle change. If you want a quick fix, your weight will be like a yo-yo. If you want permanent results, you must change your lifestyle. It's a lifestyle: definitely words to live by!

The Biggest Loser - Christy Brey

I've always believed in the right foods/exercise to bring the key to success-not really jumped on board with trendy diets. I've struggled with making the right choices & my relationship with my food: why I eat & what I eat & the amount. Lol. (Don't we all?)

However, the one diet that has had the most interest for me is from the Biggest Loser.

There are many parallels with FIT: lifestyle change, right foods, exercise, accountability, prizes, etc... However, I do have issues with the show and how they portray this image if how to lose weight and keep it off.

For one, I don't agree with the extreme exercises they do! My hubby thinks someone is going to keel over and die one day during a workout and the show will be over! No one can maintain hours of exercise all the time the rest of their lives!

With that brings extreme weight loss....Whatever happen with the common knowledge of 1-2 healthy weight loss per week?? I believe the longer it takes to take it off the longer it will stay off!! (I hope!)

Next, how many of the contestants will just lose in order to win?? (Remember Season 15 when anorexic Rachel WON 1st place??? She looked sick!) The prize(s) should be a motivation but not the REASON or ultimate goal... that's true for us FIT girls too!!

Finally, how many of those contestants have gained that weight back?? Online stories reveal many... Season 2 winner Matt Hoover married a contestant that season, Suzy. They are locals in WA state. My sister met Suzy. Suzy and Matt have gained almost all their weight back. The snap shot picture is a recent testimony on her FB page. My sister said she's very open about gaining it back and then she will tell you she's happy?! She has not conquered this area and she struggles- like us all.

I will mention there's a BL plan called 4-3-2-1-where you can do it on your own- and reminds me of some of our FIT rules. It seems to be decent but is missing the accountability. Yet my main problem is with the show itself and the way it's on TV labeled as healthy is where they crossed the line.

I admit it...I've been hooked on the show since Season 5 (with Tara Costa who pulled a car)! We don't even have cable at home so I've found ways to watch it online. There are success stories and unsuccessful ones.... but the question still remains: after the cameras leave and they are back home, day in and day out, what will happen?? That's true for ALL of us...if you

The Blood Type (Eat Right For Your Type) Diet - Niki Lott

This diet has been around for several years, and is based on the idea that people will digest/process their foods differently based on their blood type. Your specific diet and exercise must be built around what your blood type is. Certain types are to avoid/eliminate certain foods, and to use or avoid specific types of exercise.

The personal trainer at the gym I used to belong to was a supporter of this diet, and had people in our classes volunteering to try it. I read the book, and wasn't impressed or convinced. First, the entire premise is based on the theory of evolution, which undermines any credence I might have given. Obviously, their premise is not based on reality. Second, while there is no doubt that everyone is different, there seems to be little evidence or proof of the claims made that how we process food is based on our blood type. Finally, any diet that requires you to eliminate entire groups of food (meat, carbs, etc.) is generally not healthy, or something that can be sustained for a lifetime change.

Cookie Diet - Rachael Werstak

I researched the COOKIE DIET. I just cut and pasted the below explanation of this diet. It is just the most ridiculous thing I have ever read. There is even pre-packed cookies to buy that advertise "a delicious way to lose weight", ahhhh! I don't think I need to explain why this is nowhere near teaching anyone how to eat right. I would direct anyone to read on Dr. Siegal's web page for some good laughs. There is actually a part that says in 2011 he revised his 37 yr. old recipe to make smaller cookies that are less calories so you can eat more cookies during the day!!! I cannot imagine eating cookies all day and no real food.

---Dr. Siegal's Cookie Diet, The Hollywood Cookie Diet and the Smart for Life Cookie Diet all promise that eating cookies will help you drop pounds. Of course, you don't get to chow down chocolate-chip cookies -- you eat about 500 to 600 calories a day from high-protein and high-fiber weight-loss cookies (one cookie company even makes the cookies from egg and milk protein) for breakfast, lunch and any snacks. Then you eat a normal dinner, for a total of 1,000 to 1,200 calories a day. If you stick to the diet, you will likely lose some weight, but by depriving yourself all day, you set yourself up for bingeing come dinnertime, Ochner says.

Corset Diet - Rath Sears

An outdated fashion accessory is getting another chance to be in the limelight. How and why you ask? Thanks to its new reputation as a WEIGHT-Loss method, a trend experts are calling dangerous.

The corset "diet" people (mainly women) who want to achieve a tiny waist wear a corset for a few hours every day. Eventually working their way up to 12 hours a day. Many Hollywood actresses wear these corset day and night especially after they had a baby. (I'm sure these actresses are getting paid to wear and promote the products).

Many doctors warn of the serious damage to the organs, supporters of the method say that it works because they function as a non-surgical method, much like a gastric by-pass surgery. TheCorsetDiet.com, a company in the UK described it as a "gentle hugging feeling" which leads to longer feeling of fullness, which in turns leads to eating less and potentially weight loss. This crazy method also changes a person's bone structure since it compresses the rib cage. Comparable to using braces for the teeth.

Bariatric physician Jyotindra Shah, M.D. says that a long term use of the corset can bruise internal organs, damage the skin and restrict breathing. The lack of oxygenation as a result of wearing the corset contribute to metabolic syndrome, which can make you gain weight.

In my opinion this is a fad diet and the makers of these products are making good money. What lady doesn't want an hour glass figure with a tiny waist and eat less because of it. Long-term effect is the scary part. Eating right and exercising is sooo much cheaper.

Cottonball Diet - Liz Pritchett

Sure, to us it seems like common sense, don't put non food items on your mouth, right? Well what if you are able to eat something without calories and that makes you so full you won't eat other stuff with calories. That's pretty much the thought of this. It is nothing new, models have been doing it for years. You just dip the "cotton" ball(usually not cotton, just synthetic fibers) in some juice an swallow it on down. Do this before eating and you will be too full to eat other food.

Some obvious things that could go wrong with this diet are choking and intestinal blockage not to mention malnutrition. It could definitely work to lose some weight as long as you keep eating cotton balls, but how long can you really do this without causing some real problems.

I (now) feel like this seems so crazy and no one would ever do it, but at one time I would have done this and anything else to stay thin. This scares me to death being the mother of a little girl! I want her to see me put the right things in my body to stay healthy and not chasing some media sensationalized image of what a woman should look like.

Cottonball Diet - Melody Yates

Basically this diet encourages you to soak cottonballs in juice or smoothies and swallow them before your meals. They are supposed to give you the feeling of being full. The obvious problems with this diet are as follows:

1. They are a choking hazard since the cottonballs must be swallowed whole.
2. They can cause blockages in the digestive system.
3. Most cottonballs aren't really even cotton, but bleached polyester fibers, containing lots of chemicals. (yummy !) So basically you could dip your shirt in juice and swallow it.
4. Toxins in the cottonballs can build up over time and cause organ damage.

I think I will just stick with food.

Egg and Wine Diet - Tara Cooper

Basically you eat eggs and drink a lot of coffee, water, and wine...

For example for dinner,

Eat 4 eggs with black pepper

Drink 1/2 bottle of wine

Drink ½ L water

Drink black coffee / tea

I have read a bunch of diets today and so many were so silly, but for me this one takes first place.

I have done some of the fad diets and hoped it would work, and now that I've had to read a bunch I'm now embarrassed I ever fell for any of it.

Garcinia Cambogia - Ashley Webster

It has been recommended by Dr. Oz and there are tons of producers out there. It is also known as tamarind. It is a purplish fruit that looks like a small pumpkin that grows in Indonesia. The ingredient that is claimed to help you lose weight is HCA. This is a citric acid that blocks fat production and boosts serotonin levels to make you feel full. The fruit is real and I believe it is good for you on its own! As a fruit...off a tree...not mass produced in a lab. Anyhow, Web MD states that the weight loss results are inconclusive and that it has been known to produce serotonin toxicity in some people. This gives you a racing heart, muscle flexing involuntarily, stuttering, and a few other things. Many of these supplements are mass produced by Big Pharma and in some cases, they have had traces or narcotics instead of the actual herb (because it is cheaper). While it is just a supplement, the FDA has not regulated the dosage or done any objective case study on this product. I have read several customer reviews and watched some review vlogs and many people swear by it. The problem is that they say it suppresses hunger so much that they end up eating way less than they normally would. Resulting in poor nutrition. IMO, not enough research has been done to prove that this is safe or truly aids in weight loss. It's just another "get rich quick- lose weight fast" scheme. I would stay away from it!!!

Gastric Bypass Surgery - Tammy Goodman

I am doing my research on Gastric Bypass because my husband and I both had it in 2001. We were both over 300 pounds. He lost OVER 100 pounds and kept most of it off; however, he did have complications. He had a strangulated hernia about a year later. I lost about 80 pounds and gained half or more back. Sometimes, even today if I don't chew meat or broccoli well enough, it gets stuck and I have to get rid of it. This happens more so if I am REALLY hungry and eat too fast. The problem I had was iron deficiency anemia, but that was due in part to heavy menstrual cycles. My H&H (iron levels Hemoglobin and Hematocrit) were severely low, I was worn out all the time, I could not do a day's work without sitting down multiple times, because I was out of breath. I had to see a hematologist, and have an iron infusion, because pills did not work.

What is weight loss surgery? There are several types, Roux-En-Y is the type I had and is the most frequently performed in the US. They make a small pouch using staples, and divide the small intestine one end is placed to the new pouch and the other end is connected back to the intestine. Estimated weight loss in the first 1- 2 years after a Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass is approximately 1/2 to 2/3rd of excess weight. 50% excess weight loss has been documented 10 years and more after Gastric Bypass.

Weight is lost by decreasing intestinal absorption of food; instead of following its usual path, food bypasses a portion of the stomach and small bowel. In addition to surgical complications, some people experience long-term deficiencies of vitamin B12, folate, and iron. "Dumping syndrome," in which the consumption of sugar causes abdominal cramping and diarrhea, can also occur. Some people will also regain some weight in subsequent years. Gastric Banding was popular in the early 2000's people only lost about 40 percent of excess weight, with the same rate of complications after the 30-day window. There is no mal-absorption with this procedure. A band is placed around the upper part of the stomach, and a port is placed under the skin to allow adjustments to be made to increase the size of the band so less food can be consumed.

The Sleeve Gastrectomy, it was recognized in November 2009. It involves permanently removing about 90% of the stomach, leaving about the size of a banana. Most people lose about 60% of excess weight. The risks are lower than the gastric bypass, because there is no rearranging of the intestines. There is a low risk of malnutrition.

The newest to my area is the Duodenal Switch (2013) it limits food absorption by separating bile and pancreatic juices from food in the small intestine. A portion of the stomach is removed and the small intestine is attached to the stomach to carry food from the stomach to the large intestine. The digestive

juices are separated. This type of surgery is likely to cause frequent and liquid bowel movements and abdominal bloating. LIFELONG monitoring for protein malnutrition, anemia and bone disease is important. There is an increased risk of gallstones and intestinal irritation. Reference: <http://obesitymd.org/gastric.html> <http://www.valleyhealthlink.com/bariatricprogram>

HCG Drops - Hannah Bailey

I chose the HCG diet since I tried it twice and have a friend who still "tries" to use these nasty things but here are a few things I did find about them and the fact that I can testify they DON'T work and are HORRIBLE for our bodies:

This "starvation" diet limits you to about 500 calories a day while taking a human hormone that is supposed to suppress your appetite. From researching they say there is NO evidence that its even true. Yes, you'll lose weight, but only due to the extreme calorie restriction. Some say it has nothing to do with the drops just another way to make money. Though a health care provider may legally give you HCG drops, they're typically used to treat fertility problems in women and the FDA has not approved them for weight loss. Some HCG items are ILLEGAL!

Anyone who changes their intake of calories to 500 is bound to lose weight but not without major side effects! For me after the few days I tried it I was SOOOO sick, tired, crabby, ready to kill the world (my poor husband), and just ready to eat everything in sight and then after giving up, my results were a major weight gain not a loss! O did I mention the drops are DISGUSTING?

I am SO glad I didn't try to stick to such a diet plan and hurt myself. It is NOT healthy in anyway and doesn't even suggest an exercise routine or anything close to a natural way of living healthy.

HCG Drops - Samantha Miller

Like many of the other women in this group, I have tried the HCG diet. Who doesn't love the idea of losing weight without having to exercise? When I did the diet, there were at least 5 other people in my church who were doing it also. Sure, we lost a lot of weight, but guess how many of us kept it off? None!!!

Unlike FIT, which is a lifestyle change where we can eat real food, HCG limits users to a ridiculous 500 calorie a day "diet," along with the drops under your tongue. You're literally starving your body so that it will eat your fat. Who wants to stick to a 500 calorie a day diet?!?! I'm a foodie and that would never work for me.

From what I've read online, they did a study where half the people used real HCG drops while the other half took a placebo. The results were the same. The drops didn't do anything, it was the starvation diet that made people drop weight, but as soon as they began to eat "normal" again, the weight came back on.

Having tried HCG and many other diets and failed, I choose to now stick with the FIT Lifestyle. I get to eat!!!! My husband loves it and sees a difference, plus the food I make is delicious. I feel like FIT is something I could stick with the rest of my life. I could never live on the HCG diet. It's terrible. If anyone is on the fence about doing the next challenge, just do one. If you hate it (which I doubt) than at least you can say you tried. I guarantee if you give it everything you've got, you'll love the FIT way. Plus this "diet" comes with a support of women you don't find in a bottle of drops.

HCG Drops - Irene Modica

I had a few friends who were doing this diet. They lost weight then gained it back...then they went back on the diet to lose the weight again. They kept doing this to lose what they had gained.

One friend kept trying to get me to do it but the fact that you can only eat 500 calories a day and that they couldn't seem to keep it off kept me from doing it, for a while. I finally gave in and tried it.

I lost 28 pounds!

It was the hardest diet I ever tried. I took the HCG drops three times a day, I could have 500 calories of allowed foods and as much coffee and water as I wanted. (I drank a lot of coffee!!) I was constantly hungry and grumpy! If I slipped up one day the next day I ate only apples to reset my weight loss.

I was able to keep the weight off for a few months by barely eating because I was worried about gaining the weight back. Eventually I went back to the way I was eating before and little to no exercise. Every pound came back and then some.

Does this diet work? Yes if you follow the strict guidelines.

Is it a life style you can keep? No.

I know now the correct way to lose weight and stay healthy is to educate myself about real foods and exercise. I have struggled since my sophomore year in college with trying to lose weight. I wanted a quick fix.

I am so happy to have joined this group. I am learning so much about the right foods to eat and what to stay away from. I found it really isn't that hard it's just getting used to some good habits and sticking with them.

I've been losing around a pound per week. I set small goals for myself and feel great when I reach them.

I do know some people who were able to keep the weight off after the HCG drops but it's because of eating right and exercise. Not something you learn from the diet.

FIT doesn't just leave you hanging we have the tools and support group to help us learn how to take care of our bodies.

I think fear always kept me from losing weight the healthy way...I always thought the only way was to eat veggies and starve myself. I didn't understand the correct balance until now that I've been doing it for 5 weeks. I am having fun eating right and exercising. I'm watching the pounds and inches come off. I finally get it because someone took the time to teach me.

HCG Drops - Tonia Reed

This is one my family is/was into, and I had planned to start as soon as I had the money. HCG seemed safe since it is naturally produced in the body during pregnancy. It has fast results - very nice for our American mindset of get it done NOW. It burns your own fat while you stay on an impossibly low calorie count. There are several side effects. One of which is if you "cheat" and don't finish all the phases your weight plateau has messed up and gain is inevitable. Usually lots of weight gain. Now if you do a lifestyle change there can be lasting results but we are back at a lifestyle change!

Supposedly any life style should be able to go on these drops but those active in the work force can't keep their energy up and are forced to cheat. Now, not only is there weight gain possibilities, but men taking a women's HCG is never good. There can be breast swelling and everyone can suffer from fluid buildup with even the possibility of gallstones and irregular heartbeat.

HCG Drops - Sonja Ward

In my research on fad "diets" I researched a few because I was curious about cost! Jenny Craig is approximately \$532/month, Nutri System \$329/month, Weight Watchers \$20-\$70/month plus food cost.

(I feel WW is one of the healthier options out there and have used their plan previously) My personal favorite is the HCG! I "did" HCG a couple of years ago with good results and kept most of the weight off BUT ... I spent more than \$1,000 for a 6 week program and starved myself. The food plan I was on was so horrible that I just stopped eating the last week or two. I didn't use (therefore learn) good eating habits. Life is about eating healthy, feeling better, and learning to "live" within the guidelines we find to work for us. I don't know about y'all but I can't afford extreme dieting and expensive programs. I can afford to shop with a little more wisdom and spend more time cooking from scratch instead of using quick and easy. Part of learning to "live" is to realize that although it's best to stop eating by 9, eat our fruits and veggies, and stay away from sugary treats ... sometimes life happens, Valentine's day happens, birthdays will come, schedules will change, and students will bring you chocolate (yep, happened yesterday) ... So we enjoy ourselves with no guilt and get up the next day and start a new day knowing that there isn't another cheat day for a week (so let hubby take all remaining chocolate to work), eat better, exercise a little more and know that today I'm eating healthier and feeling better than I was a year ago. Thank you FIT!

HCG Shots - Rose Davenport

I think everyone is looking for the quick fix, and HCG shots was mine besides some others. I was told about the HCG by a doctor, and I thought that wow this is going to be it, and I heard the stories by people how they lost so much weight and they loved it. I decided to try it especially it was recommended by a doctor so it has to be good right. I had to do a 14 day cleanse and then I was told about the HCG and it seemed a little strange how the shots were given out to me it had to go through someone else then him and then to me, I was told I would be giving myself the shots not a doctor, that was nervous. I was told I could only eat certain meat and veggies and fruits and that I could only eat 500 calories and I thought well I do that in one meal. I started the diet and taking the shots that I hated doing and it was just weird giving myself shots in the stomach every day. I began to feel tired and hungry all the time, and I then got headaches and I stayed on them for a month and I did lose some weight but when I stopped taking it I gained it all back plus some.

HCG promised a lot of things that just weren't true, and it was never intended to be used for weight loss but to help with infertility issues. I was never told that it was against the law to use this to lose weight and that FDA had warning to doctors and companies for using it for weight loss. I was told it would reset my metabolism which would cause me to lose more weight. HCG started in the 1950s and didn't work then and now it was picked back up by Kevin Trudeau in 2007. This diet caused gallstones, restlessness, depression, fluid build up, swelling of breast in men, fatigue, and I like to add also let down and loss of money. These shots were expensive, and then you get depressed when you lose some weight and then gaining it back because you can't afford to keep paying that money every month. I know now being healthy is not a quick FIX BUT BEING FIT AND THAT IS A LIFE TIME. I am glad that I now know how to be fit and doing it the right way.

Hollywood Diet - Jessica Benowitz

I tried this in college... Sad but true. 48 hour miracle diet. Dilute and consume this bottle and only this bottle over the next 48 hours and you will lose 10 pounds. I spent \$20, spent a miserable 48 hours drinking this junk and snapping at my roommates, and lost maybe a pound. Now, after being a part of FIT, I am embarrassed to admit I fell prey to this money scheme.

Hollywood Diet - Renee Koehn

If you haven't heard of it, it is a bottle of juice you buy at the store for \$25 and that is all. You drink for a couple days, no food, just some juice. It is supposed to help you lose weight very quickly. Well of course it does. You are just drinking around 400 cal of fruit juice a day. I fell for this around ten years ago. Of course I lost some weight, but then I ate some food and bam, the weight was back just like that. A fad crash diet like that is not sustainable, and to keep off the weight you should probably never eat again.

Hydroxycut - Dorothy Gates

The commercials say it all, right?.. You take reality TV stars who have gotten a little out of shape and who have put on a few extra pounds (from way to much partying) and give them a magic pill and VaVaVa VOOOM..guys now have a 6 pack, muscles and look AMAZING and girls in itty bitty bikini, and look way to sexy. So what is this magic pills that stars are willing to endorse- for a pretty penny too, I would imagine. Hydroxycut products are dietary supplements that are marketed for weight loss, as fat burners, as energy-enhancers, as low carb diet aids, and for water loss under the lovate and MuscleTech brand names. With many options like a formula, drops, shakes, gummies, pills or even an instant drink mix and prices that range from \$13-\$40. The information below is taken from the internet from several different site.

Hydroxycut is one of the most widely known brand names in the dieting industry, and thousands of consumers are turning to its leading formula Pro Clinical Hydroxycut as a natural solution for slimming down and shedding those stubborn pounds.

Advertisements would have you believe that only Hydroxycut can provide you with the clinically tested ingredients you need to boost your metabolism and increase your caloric expenditure, and supposedly with this product you can “keep up with your exercise plan and still have the energy left to get more done in a day.”

While Hydroxycut may be popular, I can't help but wonder if Pro Clinical can live up to the hype. Is there substance and science backing this formula? Or is it all show and no go? Pro Clinical Hydroxycut is a fairly popular fat burner, and though it does have a few shortcomings, consumers keep turning to this brand of diet pill again and again.

Many consumers have met with success while using Hydroxycut products, and most reviews state that it provided fairly good results but at the cost of negative side effects.

Considering the fact that Pro Clinical Hydroxycut is fairly cheap, I can easily see why consumers rely on Hydroxycut for their weight loss needs.

So, what are the negative side effects stated above?

Back in 2009 the FDA issued a warning about Hydroxycut products and many of the formulas were recalled due to the fact that they contained ephedra, a potentially deadly but effective stimulant for weight loss. Many products were either discontinued or reformulated since then, so you don't have to worry about finding Ephedra in your next Hydroxycut product, but can you fully trust them?

Well, let's look at a more up-to-date warning:

In 2015 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning consumers to immediately stop using Hydroxycut products by Lovate Health Sciences Inc., of Oakville, Ontario and distributed by Lovate Health Sciences USA Inc. of Blasdell, N.Y. Some Hydroxycut products are associated with a number of serious liver injuries. Lovate has agreed to recall Hydroxycut products from the market. FDA has received 23 reports of serious health problems ranging from jaundice and elevated liver enzymes, an indicator of potential liver injury, to liver damage requiring liver transplant. One death due to liver failure has been reported to the FDA.

Liver injury, although rare, was reported by patients at the doses of Hydroxycut recommended on the bottle. Symptoms of liver injury include jaundice (yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes) and brown urine. Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, light-colored stools, excessive fatigue, weakness, stomach or abdominal pain, itching, and loss of appetite.

Other health problems reported include seizures; cardiovascular disorders; and rhabdomyolysis, a type of muscle damage that can lead to other serious health problems such as kidney failure.

FDA urges consumers to stop using Hydroxycut products in order to avoid any undue risk, says Linda Katz, M.D., interim chief medical officer of FDA's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. "Adverse events are rare, but exist," Katz says. "Consumers should consult a physician or other health care professional if they are experiencing symptoms possibly associated with these products.

So, would you rather a daily chance of liver damage wrapped up in a easy to swallow pill or an apple?

Ideal Protein Diet - Sarah Valladares

I decided to research the Ideal Protein diet. The diet has four different phases. In the first phase, Ideal Protein focuses on cutting down on carbs, sugars, and fats. No sugar or fruits are allowed in Phase One or Two of the diet. Dairy, nuts, root vegetables and almost any type of grain are also not allowed. There are supplements and pre-packaged snacks and meals that are part of the diet. The pre-packaged meals and snacks are processed. The average daily caloric intake is about 900 calories per day. Because of this, exercise is not encouraged during Phase One. In Phases Two and Three, the calories are slowly increased and some carbs are added back into your diet. Phase 4 is the stage where you transition in to eating a normal, but healthy diet. The diet works through forcing the body into ketosis, which is when the body is not receiving enough carbohydrates to use, it starts to use your stored fat instead and ketones are produced. The danger of ketosis is that if too many ketones build up in your blood, you can become dehydrated and also cause an imbalance in your body. High protein diets can also damage your kidneys, especially if you already have kidney problems. The program is also very expensive – usually a startup fee from \$150-\$200 and also a \$90 per week fee for the Ideal Protein foods. You would still need to purchase your other foods (meat & vegetables) separately. The testimonials I read from people who completed the diet said that, yes, if you followed the diet it does work, but it was very hard to keep from gaining the weight back in the maintenance stage. Cutting out whole food groups, not exercising, and eating 900 calories a day is not a sustainable weight loss program that can be easily maintained and made into a lifestyle.

References-

<http://www.idealprotein.com/.../ideal-protein-weight-loss-met...>(the website has very little info about the diet)

<http://www.dietsinreview.com/.../ideal-protein-weight-loss-m.../>

<http://bitemywords.com/2013/09/30/not-so-ideal-protein/>

Isagenix - Candice Huggins

What is Isagenix? It is a caloric restrictive, detox program infused with intermitted fasting. There are two main starting programs to introduce you to the company; these are a 9 day and a 30 day program. The 30 day system consists of alternating "shake days" and cleanse days." At retail value, the most basic 9 Day Deep Cleansing and Fat Burning System costs \$214. At retail value, the 30 day Cleansing and Fat Burning System costs \$373. (All prices were taken from the company website.) There is also an option to subscribe to a one-year membership for \$29 to get your products at wholesale. The wholesale price for the 30 day system is \$214, to my knowledge.

While reading about the cost of Isagenix, I stumbled upon this humorous paragraph on a site promoting it:

"Now...before you think it is too expensive, take a step back and think about this: How much money are you spending on crap food every month? Sit down and do your budget. (I recommend <http://www.mint.com> as a great source to work your budget out) It wouldn't surprise me that you were spending hundreds of dollars on food every month. This 30 day system replaces *68 meals during the course of the month. Not only replaces them, but replaces them with awesome [in bold] nutrition. And it's something you can do on remote control...grab a shake, head out the door. Your body will love you for it."

While some people are eager to put down other weight loss and fitness-based companies for their products which do not offer real nutrition, there is a lot of positive buzz over Isagenix. Isagenix proudly claims several things in a vague ingredient policy: no-compromise ingredient standards, healthy and high quality ingredients in dosages backed by science, safe ingredients tested by third-party laboratories, and transformative ingredients designed to help make a real difference in your health and vitality.

Isagenix is supposed to cleanse, detox, aid in weight loss, improve energy and performance, and support healthy aging. It claims to burn fat while supporting lean muscle, maintain healthy cholesterol levels, support telomeres (a region of repetitive DNA at the end of a chromosome that protects the chromosome from deterioration), improve resistance to illness, reduce cravings, improve body composition, and slow the aging process.

Quickly, let me detail for you one big red flag before I move onto the more troubling facts.

For quite a while, it was not clinically tested - something I feel should have taken place before the product ever hit the market. After a study, fully funded by Isagenix and of whom at least one researcher had ties to the company, the results were clearly not consistent. The numbers in the reports do not match up, and the researchers have no clear explanation as to why they contradict each other. The weight loss results were so inconclusive that they decided that the liquid diet better protected against coronary heart disease rather than aided in shedding pounds. Since they did not actually assess their guinea pigs for coronary heart disease, these results are at best speculation, based on favorable changes in the cardiac risk factor. But still, the company is using this study to promote the health benefits of their product.

Moving on, please allow me to tell you about the most troubling part of Isagenix, in my opinion: the actual ingredients themselves. Here is a short list of common ingredients in their products that raise big concerns for me: artificial and unhealthy sweeteners, preservatives, synthetic vitamins, rancid vegetable oils, soy, fractionated palm kernel oil, isolated fructose, and low-heat nonfat dry milk. Some other common ingredients many others take issue with are gluten, corn, and agave nectar. These last three ingredients are the least of my worries, therefore I did not include them in the list of most concerning ingredients.

You may be looking at the list and thinking, "Why is low-heat nonfat dry milk is on the list of bad ingredients?" I added it because nonfat milk is a denatured protein. Somehow the healthiest part of milk (the fat) has been removed to make the milk "healthier." All nonfat dry milks start with skim milk, a milk with a blue hue, a chalky taste, and watery texture that in no way resembles milk. Skim milk is in itself a huge process. Powdered solids are mixed into the unappetizing "milk" to make it taste somewhat normal. To get the powdered milk, liquid milk is forced through tiny holes at high pressure, causing the cholesterol in the milk to oxidize and toxic nitrates to form. In case this sounds perfectly normal to you, please know that oxidized cholesterol contributes to the buildup of plaque in arteries; on the other hand, oxidized cholesterol occurring naturally in unprocessed foods is an antioxidant itself, fighting inflammation in the body. The proteins in powdered milk are so very denatured due to this process that they are unrecognizable to the body and contribute to inflammation.

Whew - and that's just one little ingredient! Ready to read on?

Fructose is found naturally in fruit. I have no issue with eating in moderation all the things God made for us to eat. How do our bodies react to fructose? First of all, understand that glucose is used by every cell in the body, but fructose is only metabolized by the liver. Too much fructose is toxic to the liver, and there is already quite a high amount of fructose in the standard American diet. In addition to the whole liver thing, an excess of fructose raises triglycerides and increases fat production. Yay.... Did you also know that fructose is virtually identical to alcohol in regards to how our bodies metabolize it? When we consume fructose, every single bit of it is directed to the liver and can be toxic in the same way alcohol is. Here is a handy list of things that both chronic ethanol (alcohol) and chronic fructose consumption have in common: hypertension, myocardial infarction, dyslipidemia, pancreatitis, obesity, hepatic dysfunction, fetal alcohol/insulin resistance, and addiction or at best habituation. Isn't that just lovely?

Do I need to go into the dangers of rancid sunflower and canola oils? They disrupt the balance of omega-3 and omega-6 oils, they are both used in a ton of junk foods because of the high smoke point, and canola oil is processed using hexane, a neurotoxin. No, thank you. Oh, and if this at all matters to you, it's virtually impossible NOT to get genetically modified oils; manufacturers tend not to care about this sort of thing anyway if they're already willing to use unhealthy oils. And while we are at it, let's add soybean oil to this list. It also comes from genetically modified plants and is extracted using hexane. Soy also has the capability to mess with men's and women's hormones by activating or inhibiting the estrogen receptors in the body, which can then disrupt the body's normal function.

I do not have a ton of info on palm-kernel oil. As far as I know, it is not a terrible ingredient. Oh wait, we're talking about fractionated palm-kernel oil! It is made by extracting oil from the pit using a gasoline-like hydrocarbon solvent. Yummy!

Maltodextrin is very widely used as a stabilizer, thickener, and sweetener in about a million packaged food products. Isagenix is no exception. It is a sugar produced from a grain starch. In the United States, it is most commonly derived from corn, although it could be produced from rice, potatoes, or wheat. The interesting thing is it is basically partially hydrolyzed corn syrup, while corn syrup is the same thing but is fully hydrolyzed. While it does have 20% less sugar content, the glycemic index is 130, where table sugar's glycemic index is "only" 65. The glycemic index indicates how quickly the sugar enters the bloodstream. Maltodextrin can help muscles recover quickly after a vigorous workout or an intense exercise such as long-distance running or biking. But should everyday Americans, especially those desiring to lose weight, be eating this? It can spike blood sugar so quickly that it will be stored as fat if there is no specific task for it to do, such as repair muscle or provide energy for your workout. Once the body experiences this process of spiking the blood sugar too many times, the process of insulin resistance - and diabetes - has begun in your body. Again, if that does not scare you, you may want to consider the source of the ingredients: from genetically modified corn.

One of the synthetic ingredients in Isagenix is tricalcium phosphate. It is not inherently evil and harmful to one's body, however taking synthetic vitamins over the course of many days certainly presents issues for your body. The side effects from tricalcium phosphate alone may include the following:

- Breathing difficulty
- Throat swelling
- Severe pain in throat
- Severe pain or burning in the nose, eyes, ears, lips, and/or tongue
- Loss of vision

- Severe abdominal pain
- Intestinal obstruction
- Vomiting
- Blood in stool
- Nausea
- Decreased appetite
- Constipation
- Development of hypotension
- Heart or blood vessel collapse
- Skin irritation
- Skin burns
- Necrosis in skin and underlying tissues
- Severe change in pH (in blood)
- Confusion
- Delirium
- Stupor
- Coma

Did you see in the list that it can cause decreased appetite? (Whoop whoop!) Do you think this benefit outweighs the risks? No, this ingredient alone is enough to make me never desire to try Isagenix.

So the bottom line is: should one use Isagenix to lose weight or achieve any other fitness goal? NO! Just because something may seem to work does not mean it is safe or healthy. Most diet gimmicks do "work" to an extent. But when we add things God never intended for humans to consume - in a way God never intended for humans to consume - we are messing with His perfect design. The best weight loss supplements and vitamins you can take are the ones that never came with labels. Nothing can replace the nutrition God provided for us, no matter how tempting it may be to buy it in a fancy box or a convenient wrapper. Be safe and healthy, my friends!

All information previously disclosed comes from the following links:

<http://www.isagenix.com/.../price.../us-es-price-list-retail.pdf>

<http://www.weightlosscleanseforyou.com/.../how-much-does-the-...>

<http://www.isagenix.com/.../ingr.../us-en-ingredient-policy.ashx>

<http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/isagenix-study-is-not-.../>

<http://www.news-medical.net/.../Telomere-What-are-Telomeres.a...>

<http://crossfithamilton.com.au/isagenix-review>

<http://ancestral-nutrition.com/an-unbiased-review-of-isage.../>

<http://authoritynutrition.com/is-soy-bad-for-you-or-good/>

http://cumberlink.com/.../article_5e08f308-3799-11e4-8d18-001...

<http://www.healthcentral.com/ency/408/002889sym.html?ic=2601>

Additional Note: On the company website, I looked at the checklist of daily foods and drinks to eat on the shake days and cleanse days. On shake days, there are 9 Isagenix products to take; on cleanse days, there are 16 - SIXTEEN!!! - recommended products to take. Some are the same, like taking the same supplement once in the morning and once in the evening. I could not get over the number of Isagenix products one is supposed to take daily while following a system; it's not just about adding a shake here and there!

It Works Wraps - Sarah Marshall

I am researching these because I have several people in my life who are passionate that these work and that it is worth the heavy (in my opinion) price tag for these body wraps.

These wraps are supposed to detox your body and shrink your stomach. You are supposed to use 4 to 12 wraps every two to six months according to the It Works website. These are to be accompanied by fat fitting drinks and eating healthy and fitness. These wraps claim to take inches off your waist line within 48 hours of applying. While some claim to have success with these wraps there are also countless youtube videos and testimonials online of people having zero results. 4 wraps cost anywhere from \$59 to \$75 to \$99 according to the three different people I asked about the products - of course depending on what other products I was going to (or not at all) purchase with the wraps. (I kindly declined and said I was just looking into it)

According to web md: "There's never been any real scientific evidence that body wraps pull out toxins or purify your body in any way," says Elizabeth Tanzi, MD, a Washington, D.C., dermatologist.

As with so many of the other products that people are researching at the bottom of the it works webpage there is a disclaimer stating: "Individual results can and will vary. Testimonials are not necessarily representative of all those who use our products. All participants giving testimonials utilized a reasonable exercise program that incorporates the Ultimate Body Applicator, It Works!® dietary supplements, physical activity, and a reasonable diet. These testimonials are not intended to make claims that these products can be used to diagnose, treat, cure, mitigate or prevent any disease. These claims have not been clinically proven or evaluated by the FDA."

Which the statement at the bottom of the actual it works website alone makes me raise an eyebrow or two.

I LOVED this research piece and think it should be in every challenge (not that my opinion actually has voice in that) but it felt good to do some looking and digging into other "weight loss" options which in turn has left me feeling even more empowered with these FIT challenges.

Jenny Craig - Erin Eatherly

I've tried many other weird ways to lose weight, but this one was the most expensive/disappointing. It gained a ton of new members when Kirsti Alley campaigned with awesome results. (She later regained the weight!)

First, there is a HUGE start up cost for Jenny C. To even be able to spend a small fortune on their food, you have to pay for the right to do it.

Every week when you go in for food, you get weighed and sit with a consultant. I believe this is where some food related counseling is supposed to occur but for me, it was always just a time to pick a menu and pick substitutions for things I didn't like.

The food is highly processed. And not even very tasty. (Except for the lemon cakes. I could eat those all day long.) It contains a huge amount of allergens and while I see that they have started offering a Gluten Free menu, I just don't know that I would trust it not to contain things that are cross-reactive to gluten. It is SO processed.

From looking online, I learned that the consultants are paid by commission on food/gadget sales and that explains why they were so pushy to purchase things. And why they discouraged me from trying the budget program when spending \$130 a week on JC food quickly emptied my savings.

Jenny Craig members do tend to lose a good amount of weight, but if you transition off of the food most people regain the pounds lost.

I enjoyed some things about Jenny Craig and did have some success. However, the support I appreciated while on the program wasn't available when I couldn't buy a whole week's worth of meals. I eventually gained everything back.

Jenny Craig - Tonya Shadwell

I will tell you about my experience with Jenny Craig, I did it about 3 years ago. You go to their office, get weighed and measured each week and then you purchase their food, they have quite a bit to choose from and it tastes really good. Each week when you come in they do counseling with you as well, which is really just some chit chat with the coach. It always made me nervous because all of the coaches were over weight. One day I asked one of the girls why she didn't do the program. Her answer was that they didn't pay them enough to afford it. LOL Well i lost about 30 lbs that spring but when summer came and the kids were out of school I could no longer afford to buy their meals. It took me exactly the same length of time to gain it back as it did to lose it. ABOUT 12 weeks. So unless you can do their program for the rest of your life, this is not going to work well for you.

Karl Lagerfield Diet - Dotti Brandon

I decided to research a diet I'd never heard of, The Karl Lagerfeld Diet. I tried this once and it didn't post so here goes a second try.

The basic principles of the Karl Lagerfeld diet are simple and involve:

Limiting calorie and fat intake, avoiding refined and fried foods, increasing the intake of lean proteins and vegetables.

Protein is included in every meal to reduce the risk of unhealthy loss of muscle mass that is common while dieting. Fats are limited as much as possible and carbohydrates are obtained almost exclusively from vegetables especially in the early phases of the diet. (sounds ok so far)

Phase One: VLCD

Phase one involves consuming only 800-900 calories per day and this phase is advised to be undertaken only for two weeks. Dieters are allowed three meals daily that consist of a protein food supplement and vegetables.

This phase should only be used while under medical supervision! (YIKES!!)

Phase Two: Low Calorie

Dieters may choose to skip this phase and commence their diet at phase two which involves 1000-1200 calories per day and allows the substitution of the evening protein supplement with a lean protein choice such as chicken breast, fish or meat.

A serving of low fat yogurt or cheese is also allowed at the end of the meal.

Phase Three: Less Restrictive

In phase three the calorie allowance is increased up to 1200-1600 per day and dieters are permitted to add whole-wheat toast to their breakfast as well as fruit after the evening meal.

The diet involves substituting meals with a protein supplement designed by Dr. Houdret for at least one meal each day. Flavors include chocolate, fish soup, egg based custard, and ham & cheese omelet (these don't sound very appetizing to me)

Lean proteins, low fat dairy products and vegetables form the basis of the diet in addition to the protein supplements.

Fruit and whole wheat bread are allowed in limited quantities in the later stages of the diet.

The initial phases are likely to give quick weight loss, due to the low calorie intakes but being so restrictive would be very difficult for most people and definitely hard to maintain for long periods of time. Not to mention the potential health problems this diet could cause. The emphasis of this diet is to look good, not necessarily be healthy. It also promotes cosmetic surgery and gives dangerous advice such as chew your food up and spit it out, which could lead to eating disorders. All in all, this diet scares me. Lagerfeld even has stated that dieting has to be a "form of punishment". YIKES!

Low-Fat Diet - Carol Lesley

So I have done many diets in my days. My girls always pick that if there is a diet out there with a book on it, I own it, and if there is a workout video that's a fad, I have bought it. After all of these years there was still a struggle to understand good nutrition. One diet I bought into and didn't quite understand how wrong it is until lately was the idea of a low fat diet.

There have been many disproven thoughts on the idea of a low fat diet. A few decades ago the diet was built on the cornerstone idea that saturated fat caused heart disease, and because of that they pushed a very low fat diet {cutting out eggs, meat, and the fat in dairy} and moving to more wheat, fruits, veggies, beans, etc. This made the diet way higher in carbs.

It was published by health organizations and the government in 1977 to have low fat guidelines in your diet to help with what they thought was causing cardiovascular disease, and they have not changed their position though it has been proven wrong. On top of that since refined sugars and carbs have been pushed, and low fat junk food floods everywhere you turn with the labels "healthy" ... "low-fat" problems just seem to be getting worst. Just because there is correlation to this diet being pushed and obesity skyrocketing, and seen in the graph I will show, that doesn't mean it is the cause, but one can only imagine that it has something to do with it.

One thing we do know is that refined sugars, carbs and high fructose corn syrup does cause heart disease... the exact thing they thought this diet would alleviate. There have been 3 major studies done by the women's health initiative, multiple risk factor intervention trial, and action for health in diabetes, which all proved that low fat diets don't lower the results in heart disease. There were some benefits, like in patients with diabetes. They lose more weight on this type of diet, but it has to be paired with exercise and a restricted caloric intake, but even those people didn't live longer on the diet, as those on a different

diet. The bottom line is massive long-term studies show that low-fat diets generally do not reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer or other major lifestyle diseases.

A few reasons low fat diets don't work is because of the things it limits... animal protein {meat and eggs}. These are protein rich and induce satiety and help with weight loss. It also promotes increased use of vegetable oil which can cause inflammation and increase the risk of heart disease.

As we are all learning, being on this fit journey, the best diet is a balanced one. Fats are not bad for us, but like anything balance is key

Master Cleanse - Amanda Coupe

I chose to do my research on The Master Cleanse or The Lemonade Diet. Several years ago I tried The Master Cleanse to detox, test myself, and would have loved to have lost a few lbs. The first time, I just did it 3 days. I had no weight loss results and the only toxins that seem to be released came out through the pores on my face. LOVELY! Still, knowing I could go 3 days made me try for 11 and...I did it. I went for the full time and only drank the lemon, cayenne pepper, and maple syrup drink along with Senna tea or salt water to get "things moving". As to be expected, I was tired and, no doubt, irritable. The odd number days seemed to be the hardest, with the 3rd, 5th and 7th downright unbearable. However, I did it and lived to tell about it. I couldn't tell that I lost any weight, but nor did I have any noticeable negative effects. Apparently friends of friends have not been so fortunate and really messed up their system by repeating the diet multiple times. From my research I learned that the book recommends that you consume 6-12 glasses of this special lemonade. If one were to consume just 8 glasses, you would consume 1 cup of lemon juice, 1 cup of maple syrup and about a teaspoon of cayenne pepper each day. That is approximately 900 calories consumed (almost entirely from the sugar content) with very little of any of the other nutrients our bodies need. One website I read <http://www.rachelavalon.com/master-cleanse-risks> gives the nutritional content in those 3 ingredients and points out that it is quite simple to see that this "diet" does not give the human body what it needs to properly function. <http://www.livestrong.com/article/375172-master-cleanse-dangers/> lists both minor (dehydration, fatigue, dizziness, nausea) dangers as well as major (increased risk of heart attack, heart muscle loss, damaged blood vessels) dangers that your body can experience if you repeat crash diets that have such a limited caloric intake. For me, I never repeated the "diet" because it didn't seem to help me to lose weight or "detox". I personally didn't mind the drink and assumed it was okay since it was real foods. From research and better knowing my own body, I know that I NEED more calories and that I can lose weight and feel better without starving myself or consuming so much concentrated sugar water.

Master Cleanse - Nicole Slabaugh

Last year I stumbled across the Lemonade Detox also known as The Master Cleanse. I was intrigued because it promises to cleanse your body from toxins, plus help you lose weight. I went out and bought all the supplies and mixed up my first pitcher of "lemonade". It was horrible!!! Needless to say I didn't last a day. I felt guilty because it seemed like a healthy way to lose weight, and I just couldn't cut it. This week I decided to do so further research on this fad. Wow. I'm so glad I didn't test the water any further.

The lemonade detox is usually for 10 days. It promises you will detox your liver and lose up to 20 pounds by just drinking 3 beverages. Every day you drink 6-12 glasses of lemonade (lemon juice, maple syrup, cayenne pepper, and water), 4 glasses of salt water, and 1 glass of an herbal laxative tea. A whopping 650 to 1300 calories a day (depending on how many glasses of lemonade you drink). After 10 days, you start

gradually adding back food in your diet, starting with soup/juice and working up to raw fruit and veggies. Raw fruit and veggies will make up the core of your new eating habits. Meat and dairy should be limited.

Now for the other side of the coin. Yes, it's true you will lose weight quickly. However, you will also gain it back quickly. You see, your metabolism has been slowed down!! In addition, this cycle of losing and rebounding puts strain on your internal organs. You've lost muscle all over your body. This means the most important muscle, the heart can be at risk. Other negative side effects includes nutrient deficiencies, bone deficiencies and water loss. Frequent complaints are headaches, fatigue, hunger, illness. Many report horrendous constipation and bowel problems upon resuming solids. Suddenly this detox doesn't seem so attractive does it? I'm sticking with the FIT lifestyle!!!!

Mayo Clinic Diet - Lori Janiszewski

It's for people about to have surgery that need to drop weight quickly. But, as you can imagine, many people, including myself & several friends did it as a quick weight loss. You eat lots of protein in the mornings & then canned tuna & grapefruit juice for lunch. It was very strict with amounts & we were all starving and dreading each meal since it wasn't what we actually wanted to eat. We lost weight & then promptly gained back all of it & then some. Diets like this are for if you want to fit in that dress or go on vacation, but they teach you nothing about how to have lasting results. I've tried probably every popular fad diet out there. Losing weight the right way with learning how to eat clean & exercise is really & truly the only way to have lasting results & better health.

Military Diet - Kat Mis

The FAD diet I chose to research was "The Military Diet" - I myself have actually done this and can tell you that it doesn't work.

Their slogan is "The Military Diet, or the 3 day diet, is a fast way to lose up to 10 pounds a week." You eat really basic food that we all pretty much keep stocked in our kitchen for three days and then stick to no more than 1500 for the other 4 days of the week.

What a day on this diet looks like:

Day 1 - Breakfast:

1/2 Grapefruit

1 Slice of Toast

2 Tablespoons of Peanut Butter

1 cup Coffee or Tea (with caffeine)

Lunch:

1/2 Cup of Tuna

1 Slice of Toast

1 cup Coffee or Tea (with caffeine)

Dinner:

3 ounces of any type of meat

1 cup of green beans

1/2 banana

1 small apple

1 cup of vanilla ice cream

There were days where it wasn't too bad, and there were days that I was just starving all day. Maybe it's a way to trick your body, but I don't believe that we should have to trick our bodies to get results. I think I lost 3lbs on it, and I would have to say I think that was all water weight. I have learned through this group that if you want results, you have to work for them. It's not easy losing weight, and all these fad diets out there are making it us crazy thinking we can make HUGE changes in just days. We have to make the right choices to be successful in our weight loss journey.

Morning Banana Diet - Sarah Valladares

I just realized the diet we researched had to be a fad diet or on faddiet.com, so I also researched the Morning Banana diet. For breakfast you can only eat bananas (as many as you want). For lunch you can eat whatever you want, but you cannot have dessert. You can have an afternoon snack, but it must be "reasonable"- whatever that means. Dinner has to be eaten before 8 pm, but you can eat whatever you want besides dessert. You must go to bed before midnight. First of all, this diet does not really encourage healthy eating, because as long as you eat your morning bananas you can pretty much eat whatever you want the rest of the day. Although it does restrict "desserts", meals and snacks can be pizza or fast food. Personally, a banana or two would not fill me up for breakfast. This would most likely cause me to overeat throughout the day. It would also only take a few weeks before I got sick of eating bananas, so this diet is definitely not the best way to get lasting weight loss results!

<http://www.faddiet.com/morning-banana-diet.html>

Nutrisystem - Cheryl Gillam

This fad advertises quick weight loss with meals proportioned and delivered to your door. It encourages you to eat 5-6 meals per day. It even has a community support page. You can choose which of their foods you want to order.

My experience: I thought it sounded pretty awesome, but quit after only 3 months. Why? Several reasons. Most of all it is way too expensive. I paid roughly \$300 per month on just my meals from their site. Plus I still had to buy food at the store for the rest of my family. The portions were pretty small which never really left me satisfied after my meal. The site does encourage you to add fruits and veggies with your meal to make it more filling, which is another added expense at the grocery store.

so by the time I ordered my Nutrisystem, bought my fruits and veggies, and got my family's groceries, I was easily spending up to \$800 per month. I did lose weight fairly quickly as it advertises only to gain a whole lot more back once I stopped the program. It never taught you how to eat healthy outside of their products.

I am so very grateful to have this forum to help and encourage me to buy real food and make healthy meals that my whole family can enjoy together.

Nutrisystem - Laura Karpinski

I tried this diet a few years ago, and only lasted a few days! I tried it because a family member had signed up, paid for the food, and then really didn't like it. I gave it a try and only lasted a few days! I discovered that eating food provided was disgusting, and teaching me how to deal with real food and choices! It was gritty, tasteless food, and would be expensive if I had paid for it myself. Nothing accomplished other than won't try that again!

Nutrisystem - Becky Post

I feel I've done almost every diet out there. Cabbage soup, weight watchers, Nutrisystem, HCG, Adkins, 20 grams of fat or less, 3 day diet, and a lot more I can't name off the top of my head. I'm going to talk about Nutrisystem for the challenge. They provide you with a month of meals. You then go out to buy the fruit & veggies to go with the prepackaged meals. These meals are not real food. All processed with lots of chemicals. I also don't feel they teach you how to eat in real life. What happens when you stop getting the prepackaged meals? You load up your plate. Eating all the processed foods are very hard on your body. What does your body do with a bunch of chemicals? They sit inside of you for way too long. Each person is different and requires different types of food and calories.

Paleo Diet - Angela Bolt

The fad diet that I have chosen to investigate and write about is the Paleo Diet. While it does not promote gimmicks like certain products do, it does have some restrictions of certain foods. It does restrict highly processed foods and recommends eating whole foods. So far so good. However, there are some whole foods that are restricted in the diet, so I wanted to find out more about it.

My main problem with this diet is the basic premise. The Paleo Diet considers how humans evolved in the Paleolithic era and bases the recommendations off of what cavemen were able to eat. The consistent argument for the restrictions is "our caveman ancestors didn't have access to this, so we shouldn't eat any (or much) of this certain food." Even if I believed in evolution as the origin of man, which I don't, there is NO evidence of cavemen or what they ate. It's an argument based on false belief.

The main restriction with the paleo diet that doesn't make any sense based on what we know about healthy foods is the restriction of grains and legumes (beans, peas, peanuts, etc). The biggest argument that I've seen against these foods (other than the lack of access by cavemen) is that they contain phytic acid. Phytic acid is a compound found in grains, seeds, nuts, and beans. (By the way, seeds and nuts are allowed in the Paleo Diet because the cavemen could eat them easily. They don't seem to be concerned with phytic acid in this case.) Phytic acid can inhibit the absorption of nutrients such as iron, zinc, and calcium. However, studies have shown that if other foods are eaten, such as foods high in vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin D, and probiotics, the harmful effects of the phytic acids in the foods are reduced. There are still many benefits of eating grains and beans; we should balance these foods with other types of foods as well.

The foods supported by the Paleo diet are good for us. Recipes that have the word "Paleo" in them can still be good for us. The encouragement of whole foods is a good thing. Yes, it does seem to be encouraging a lifestyle change. However, what is this change based on? There are so many authorities out there about what foods are good for you and bad for you. What authority should we use? I believe that we should filter all of this knowledge through the Word of God. Here are just a few verses we should keep in mind. I'm sure many of you could think of more. Genesis 1:29, Genesis 9:3, and most importantly, I Corinthians 10:31 which says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." I can't follow or encourage a diet in which the basic premise is based on the theory of evolution because I don't believe this glorifies God in my life.

Perfect Body Solution - Christen Lucas

I've tried every kind of diet pill.. hydroxycut more times than I can count, slimquick, allie, acai berry, xenadrine, but the one I did most recently, right before my pregnancy was perfect body solutions.

My best friend was in the midst of taking it and had lost 12 lbs in 2 months.. she is already a pretty small girl so i was like, count me in. She sold it to me, and said it worked because of the bee pollen in it. Bee Pollen is said to improve nutrition by fixing your diet that is nutritionally unbalanced and deficient by it's

rejuvenating elements. It is also supposed to be able to increase stamina and athletic performance, relieve joint pain, treat your allergies, and reduce gastrointestinal problems.

Here are some claims from a website that sales Perfect Body Solutions "the product you have been looking for. Perfect Body Solutions supports your body as you shed unwanted pounds and inches in the areas you struggle with the most. The proprietary blend of ingredients in Perfect Body Solutions immediately goes to work to decrease your appetite, increase your energy, and keep your body functioning at optimal levels while getting the results you desire. Get the perfect body you have always wanted with Perfect Body Solutions."

Apart from that bee pollen is supposed to also speed up your metabolism, the presence of lecithin which is supposed to flush out your fat, and bee pollen is supposed to help suppress the appetite and eliminate cravings. WWOOO that's a lot of claims right there.

After doing research many of these claims either have no verification of proof or are just not true. The one that bee pollen is "ergogenic"- or will help with your athletic performance has been proven through research to not be true. The idea that bee pollen is a superfood is also not true.

There is much "pollen- legend" claiming that if you eat it you will live to 125, because there is a villiage in the mountains of Russia that eat it and some have lived to 125 years old. There have been no substantiating proof to these claims.

One claim that does seem to be true is that it is an anti-inflammatory, but that does not come without risk. The anti-inflammatory effect came from inhibition of NO production and inhibition of COX-2. COX-s effects increase the risk of heart attacks in those who are susceptible.

While taking the pill I noticed my heart would start to race and would just have an unwell feeling. They say you need to drink plenty of water and eat healthy {uh ok} but it was the same feeling I use to get in the old hydroxycut days. Come to find out with the FDA did a study, Perfect Body Solution contained sibutramine which was taken off the market in 2010. There are many risks and side effects linked to Sibutramine including substantially increasing blood pressure and/or pulse rate in some patients and can present a significant risk for patients with a history of coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, arrhythmias, or stroke.

I did lose a few pounds but stopped taking it after feeling generally unwell. It was not long before my friend had put her weight back on. The thing with diet pills, is they claim you will keep the weight off, but without a healthy lifestyle that is just not true. There is not get skinny quick pill that will work long term. Most claim they work with a healthy diet and exercise and just increase the amount of weight you will lose, but there is no way to substantiate the claim. The only way to maintain a healthy weight is to live a healthy lifestyle.

Phentermine - Kristy Daining

I decided to choose this diet pill because I personally had scary results. I did lose weight with it 18lbs in a week and half to be exact, but it also sent me to the ER. The pill makes you feel dehydrated, you are not hungry, but you need to eat to have adequate energy. My blood sugar dropped and I nearly passed out at work. My boss sent me home because I had no color. My heart felt "funny" so I went to the ER. My heart rate was 45 bmp and irregular. Normal is 60-100. I believe this pill caused my issue. Also, I had no idea that it would make you test positive for amphetamines during a drug test! I definitely didn't and don't want to test positive for any drug test dr proscribed or not. After, research I found that this pill can cause irregular heart rate and heart valve issues which can cause pulmonary hypertension. This can happen even years after stopped use!!!! I had a friend who was taking it and nearly passed out due to her HR shooting

up to 140 at rest. I tell everyone who remotely entertains the thought of this "diet pill" to STAY AWAY!!! It is hazardous to your health!!!

Phentermine - Maribel Duran

The reason I picked this is because I have personally done these pills in the past and have friends that have used them. I cannot say that they don't work in regards to suppressing your appetite because they do, but might I say that doesn't come with a price. Phentermine has horrible side effects that I will post below! While I was taking it I can pretty much say I had each and every one of these.

Common phentermine side effects may include:

feeling restless or hyperactive; headache, dizziness, tremors; sleep problems (insomnia); dry mouth or an unpleasant taste in your mouth; diarrhea or constipation, upset stomach; or increased or decreased interest in sex, impotence.

Aside from these horrible side effects I have read of cases where people have permanent heart damage because of Phentermine! So yes, I did lose some weight on this, but it all came back and with vengeance. I am just thankful that I found this challenge which is a lifestyle change and not just a quick fix!

P.I.N.K Method - Melinda Dove

This weight loss plan for women only stands for Power, Intensity, Nutrition, Kardio. It is a combination of a specific meal plan combined with intense workout videos. Like other plans, this one takes you through a series of phases—three to be exact. The meal plan consists of whey protein shakes with added fruit, lots of veggies, and lean meats. It is your basic low carb/low calorie diet. Their website offers its members many tools from tracking calories to recipes.

PROBLEMS WITH P.I.N.K.

- 1) Whey protein is to be consumed daily. Although this product is continuously promoted for losing weight, researchers have failed to mention potential side effects. "Whey protein may cause abnormal heart rhythms, changes in cholesterol levels, headache, increased diabetes risk, increased fracture or osteoporosis risk, kidney dysfunction, liver damage, stomach or intestine symptoms (acid reflux, bloating, constipation, cramps, gas, increased bowel movements, movement problems, nausea, reduced appetite, swelling of limbs, and upset stomach), and thirst" (Mayoclinic.org). This is not even a comprehensive list!
- 2) Customers who have had success losing the weight on PINK have a hard time keeping it off. Although it emphasizes healthy eating, it does not coincide with everyday life.

CONCLUSION

I recommend the workout DVDs for intense head-to-toe workouts, but the meal plan lacks the training FIT provides. Being healthy takes time (more than three phases). Stick with FIT!

Plexus - Rachel Myers

Well when I research something, I RESEARCH something so here is my novel on Plexus Block:

WHY WEIGHT LOSS SCHEMES DON'T WORK

Note: I am slightly sarcastic by nature, so when reading, please recognize that I am going to tell it like I see it! I do love you and hope you find what will work for you!!

There is a fundamental truth about EVERY weight loss "scheme" out there! Eventually you have to stop! smile emoticon Unless of course you are one of the extremely fortunate people that can convince others

to join the craziness that you signed up for and then you can get your products for “free” for the time being and then eventually have to pay for them when they finally decide to quit!

My mother used to make us say several quotes growing up and one of them was, “Easy is its own reward!” So many people are looking for an “easy” way to lose weight! That is what many of these companies try to sell. How EASY it is! One such company is Plexus.

I will admit I was on this bandwagon until becoming pregnant with my 3rd child and then I didn't feel comfortable taking the products. Some of them are very clear about not taking them while pregnant or nursing. While it is said that the drink Plexus Slim can be taken while pregnant and breastfeeding, I didn't want to take any risks! Plus, I'm going to look pregnant! So what's the point in investing the money if I don't get the benefits of looking fabulous?!? (Yes, I am that vain!)

Why was I drawn to Plexus? NUMBER ONE IT SOUNDED SO EASY! Second, I LOVE food and this was NOT a replacement meal!!

However, today I will look at three reasons why this product will not work in the long run. Cost, eating habits, and exercise, and what it does to your body.

1. Cost –

I mentioned this in the beginning, but even if you were to become an Ambassador for the company and get your products at wholesale, the cost for this is outrageous!

If you were to take all of the “recommended” products from Slim to the new one which is what I will talk about "Block" the cost per month would be about \$250 (w/o shipping or tax). PER MONTH!! OUCH!!

Alternatives: Join FIT for only \$10 a month and learn how to eat right, exercise, have accountability, learn some AWESOME things about yourself, and be surrounded by some pretty AMAZING ladies!!

2. Eating Habits & Exercise –

Most ambassadors you speak to will tell you that you do not have to change what you eat or exercise in order to lose weight with this product. According to the website information provided, you do NOT have to exercise! Although going for a brisk 20-30 min walk will help aid your loss.

As for changing what you eat, the only guideline given is that the product has natural ingredients that have been shown to reduce appetite. So if you keep eating past your “hunger” level then the product will not have the effects you wish to see. It teaches NOTHING about how 100 calories in “snack size” dessert is different from 100 calories that you could get from eating nuts. How by choosing the right kind of food to put into your body will make a HUGE difference in how your body responds in energy levels, how it will process it to use later, or even how the right or wrong kind of foods can affect how you sleep!

Alternative:

Eat right and exercise!! The kind of food that you put into your body matters! It is simple. Burn more calories than you consume and you will lose weight! Not only that, but you will start to develop habits that form for a lifetime!! If you are the type of person that is looking to lose weight, think about how you got to where you are in the first place!! Isn't the definition of insanity doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result!?!?

3. What it does to your body –

Plexus has several products that they offer the main one is the Plexus Slim or the pink drink. I think other people will discuss that one in length so I am going to focus on their newest product Block!! Here is what the website has to say about the product:

“Lows the absorption of starch and sugar for healthy glucose levels.”

“Block reduces starch and sugar from converting to glucose in the body by up to 48%.”

Features and Benefits:

Helps support healthy blood glucose levels.

Helps reduce glycemic index of ingested foods.

Helps block starch and table sugar digestion/absorption.

Inhibits enzymes that convert starches to glucose.

Slows conversion of glucose to fat.

Promotes healthy weight control.

Minimizes free radical damage/oxidative stress.

Promotes sustained energy/reduces fatigue.

Lowers glycemic index rating of ingested foods.

Note that it is recommended that you take 4 of these pills per day! So just this product alone you would need 2 bottles a month at an Ambassador price of \$59.90 (w/o shipping and tax) OUCH!! Here are the ingredients that I could find for the product and what that ingredient is known for I will try to list some risks and also show an alternative:

I will say after conducting my research this product basically contains two ingredients InSea2 Brown Seaweed and White Kidney Bean Extract. The rest of the ingredients are what is used for the production of it being in a “pill” form.

This product contains Iodine 140 mcg. 93% of the daily value! This is in just ONE pill!!! Yikes!!

Iodine/ From inSea2 Brown Seaweed -

Iodine is a chemical element. The body needs iodine but cannot make it. The needed iodine must come from the diet. You can find it in processed salt. Most of the world’s iodine is found in the ocean, where it is concentrated by sea life, especially seaweed.

Large amounts or long-term use of iodine are UNSAFE. Adults should avoid prolonged use of doses higher than 1100 mcg per day (the upper tolerable limit, UL) without proper medical supervision. In children, doses should not exceed 200 mcg per day for children 1 to 3 years old, 300 mcg per day for children 4 to 8 years old, 600 mcg per day for children 9 to 13 years old, and 900 mcg per day for adolescents. These are the upper tolerable limits (UL).

RISKS:

Higher intake might cause thyroid problems.

Autoimmune thyroid disease: People with autoimmune thyroid disease may be especially sensitive to the harmful side effects of iodine. Rash called dermatitis herpetiformis: Taking iodine can cause worsening of this rash. Thyroid disorders, such as too little thyroid function (hypothyroidism), an enlarged thyroid gland (goiter), or a thyroid tumor: Prolonged use or high doses of iodine might make these conditions worse.

Iodine can affect the thyroid. Taking iodine along with medications for an overactive thyroid might decrease the thyroid too much. Do not take iodine supplements if you are taking medications for an overactive thyroid. Some of these medications include methenamine mandelate (Methimazole), methimazole (Tapazole), potassium iodide (Thyro-Block), and others.

* Amiodarone (Cordarone) interacts with IODINE

Amiodarone (Cordarone) contains iodine. Taking iodine supplements along with amiodarone (Cordarone) might cause too much iodine in the blood. Too much iodine in the blood can cause side effects that affect the thyroid.

* Lithium interacts with IODINE

Large amounts of iodine can decrease thyroid function. Lithium can increase iodine's effects on the thyroid. Taking iodine along with lithium might decrease the thyroid function too much. Do not take large amounts of iodine if you are taking lithium.

* Medications for high blood pressure (ACE inhibitors) interacts with IODINE

Some medications for high blood pressure might decrease how quickly the body gets rid of potassium. Most iodide supplements contain potassium. Taking potassium iodide along with some medications for high blood pressure might cause too much potassium in the body. Do not take potassium iodide if you are taking medications for high blood pressure. This supplement does not list to contain Potassium Iodide. Some medications for high blood pressure include captopril (Capoten), enalapril (Vasotec), lisinopril (Prinivil, Zestril), ramipril (Altace), and others.

* Medications for high blood pressure (Angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs)) interacts with IODINE

Some medications for high blood pressure might decrease how quickly the body gets rid of potassium. Most iodine supplements contain potassium. Taking potassium iodide along with some medications for high blood pressure might cause too much potassium in the body. Do not take potassium iodide if you are taking medications for high blood pressure. The ARBs include losartan (Cozaar), valsartan (Diovan), irbesartan (Avapro), candesartan (Atacand), telmisartan (Micardis), and eprosartan (Teveten).

* Water pills (Potassium-sparing diuretics) interacts with IODINE

Most iodine supplements contain potassium. This one does not. Some "water pills" might also increase potassium in the body. Taking potassium iodide along with some "water pills" might cause too much potassium to be in the body. Do not take potassium iodide if you are taking "water pills" that increase potassium in the body. Some "water-pills" that increase potassium in the body include spironolactone (Aldactone), triamterene (Dyrenium), and amiloride (Midamor).

Alternatives:

The RDA (recommended daily amount) of iodine is 150 micrograms daily for everybody over the age of 14. The RDA for children ages 1-8 is 90/mcg every day, ages 9-13 is 120/mcg every day. If you're pregnant or breastfeeding, it is recommended that you get 290/mcg every day.

1. Sea Vegetables – Kelp, Arame, Hiziki, Kombu, and Wakame. Kelp has the highest amount of iodine of any food on the planet and just one serving offers 4 times the daily minimum requirement. 1 Tablespoon of Kelp contains about 2000/mcg of iodine

2. Cranberries – This antioxidant rich fruit is another great source. About 4 ounces contains 400/mcg of iodine. Of course fresh berries is going to be better than sugar filled juice!

3. Yogurt – 1 cup contains approximately 90/mcg of iodine. It is also a great probiotic!

4. Navy Beans – Many beans are a great food source of iodine and navy beans top the list! Just ½ cup of these beans contain about 32/mcg of iodine! Not just that but they are high in fiber too!

5. Strawberries – Once cup of fresh strawberries has approximately 13/mcg of iodine!

6. Cheese – Cheese is high in iodine, along with essential B vitamins, calcium, and protein. One ounce of raw cheddar cheese contains around 10-15 mcg of iodine.

7. Potatoes – One of the richest sources of iodine in the vegetable kingdom. Leave the skin on and one medium-sized baked potato holds 60/mcg of iodine.

White Kidney Bean: concentration 10:1 -

Proponents claim that white bean extract can prevent alpha-amylase (an enzyme that occurs naturally in the body) from breaking down carbohydrates into glucose (sugar). By slowing up alpha-amylase activity, proponents suggest, white bean extract leaves behind less glucose for the body to turn into fat. White bean extract is widely marketed as weight loss aid. The product is also purported to prevent obesity and not only touted as a natural weight loss aid, white bean extract is said to keep blood sugar in check, fight insulin resistance and protect against diabetes and heart disease, enhance athletic performance, increase energy, ease symptoms of arthritis, and aid in the prevention of colon cancer as well as reduce abdominal fat.

RISKS: White kidney bean extract may help you lose weight by blocking the absorption of carbohydrates, which is why it's often called a carb blocker or starch blocker. While the extract can cause gastrointestinal side effects, they should go away after your body adjusts to the supplement. It can also affect blood sugar or interact with medications used to treat blood sugar, so talk to your health care provider before taking white bean extract, especially if you have diabetes.

Allergies, Interactions and Warnings

If you're allergic to legumes, do not take white bean extract. Also be aware that amylase inhibitors may be extracted from wheat, which would not be a safe alternative if you have wheat allergies. Women who are pregnant or breast-feeding and those with kidney or liver disease should consult their health care provider before using white bean supplements. Amylase inhibitors may lower levels of blood sugar. For this reason, they may not be safe if you take medications to regulate blood sugar or you have diabetes or hypoglycemia.

Weight-Loss Expectations

In its review of the studies published to date, the "Nutrition Journal" reported the amount of weight lost by subjects in studies published between 2007 and 2010. In three separate studies, participants who took white bean extract lost 4 pounds over eight weeks, 6.5 pounds over four weeks and 7 pounds after taking supplements for 12 weeks. The subjects in each study who took plain sugar tablets either stayed at the same weight or gained 1 pound. Another review in the "British Journal of Nutrition" in July 2011 concluded that six clinical trials had quality issues and that more research is needed to verify the effectiveness of white bean extract.

ALTERNATIVE: Eat white kidney beans!

Polyphenols – This supplement only contains 20% of the brown seaweed polyphenols

Polyphenols are classified as antioxidants, which mean they can protect the body from the harmful effects of free radicals. Free radicals are unstable molecules in our body that are notorious for damaging healthy cells. An easy way to substantially minimize the damaging effects of free radicals is to have foods high in polyphenols.

RISKS: As per the studies conducted by the American Society for Clinical Nutrition, polyphenols could potentially interfere with iron absorption, and thus may induce iron deficiency in certain borderline anemic subjects.

Alternative: Polyphenols are chemicals found in plants that are believed to have important health benefits, according to the American Cancer Society. Some evidence exists that polyphenols help prevent health dangers such as cancer, high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

ALTERNATIVES: Foods high in beneficial polyphenols include red cabbage, berries, red and purple grapes, broccoli, radishes, tea and apples. So far, there is no conclusive research about the benefits of polyphenols. Experts advise consuming a balanced diet rich in fruits, beans and vegetables.

Microcrystalline Cellulose –

Is an insoluble fiber, microcrystalline cellulose is not absorbed into the blood stream, so it cannot cause toxicity when taken orally. In fact, it is so inert it is often used as a placebo in controlled drug studies.

RISKS:

Because cellulose is not absorbed in the intestine, consumption of large amounts of it may increase the frequency and volume of bowel movements. However, microcrystalline cellulose has less of an impact on bowel frequency and binding than do other forms of cellulose. Some studies suggest that significant amounts of microcrystalline cellulose in the diet can promote weight loss, either by adding to a feeling of fullness or by reducing the absorption of other nutrients in the diet. However, the dosages at which these effects occurred were much higher than are found in most pharmaceuticals that use this ingredient.

Microcrystalline cellulose may create an allergic reaction in some patients, although there are few reported cases of this. Because the substance is not absorbed, symptoms of allergic reaction are likely to be limited to gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea or gas

Alternatives: Don't take a pill for what you could eat instead! This is basically one of the ways that they make the tablet to put the other ingredients listed above inside.

Gelatin – Plexus does not disclose the source of the gelatin. Umm...I think this speaks for itself.

Magnesium Stearate -

Essential for life, magnesium is a mineral that is necessary to turn food into energy, transport nutrients across cell membranes, maintain bone structure and make DNA. Stearic acid is a saturated fat that occurs naturally in animal and plant foods, such as chicken, grass-fed beef, coconut oil and chocolate. According to the U.S Food and Drug Administration, magnesium stearate is safe for humans.

Magnesium stearate has natural lubricant properties, something very important to the quality in how vitamins are produced. This is especially true for complex formulas with multiple ingredients which have inherently different chemistry properties (meaning that ingredients could stick together or clump in different ways based on their properties).

RISKS:

This innocuous additive is found in 95 percent of supplements on the market today. As of late, this additive is also being called a toxin. To better explain its dangers, you have to understand exactly what magnesium stearate does and where it is found in supplements. There is also confusion on the differences between magnesium stearate and stearic acid.

Magnesium stearate is often found as a combined product of stearic acid and according to That's Fit, it is made by the hydrogenation of cottonseed or palm oil. Cottonseed oil has the highest content of pesticide residues of all commercial oils, and it coats the nutrients that are found in supplements. Therefore it also delays the absorption of these nutrients by the intestines. In large doses, magnesium stearate damages the skin and causes liver toxicity.

Stearic acid, combined with magnesium forms the stearate; the acid is found in nature in many of the foods that are widely consumed such as poultry, fish, meat, eggs, butter, milk products, grains, cocoa, coconut and many others.

Alternatives: Basically this ingredient is used because the company can claim "all natural" ingredients. This is added so that the other ingredients mentioned above will be delayed in absorption by the intestines it also saves the company money on production. As mentioned above eat the right foods and you don't have to have this in your diet!!

Silicon dioxide –

Silica is not digested or absorbed in the intestinal tract, which means it poses no risk of toxicity. Silicon dioxide is "generally recognized as safe" -- or GRAS -- by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

RISKS: Although kidney stones may form with consumption of massive amounts of silica over a long period, the amount of silica in food, pharmaceuticals and supplements is not significant enough to cause stone formation or other side effects.

Alternatives: You could just go eat dirt! This is basically an anti-caking agent. It is actually found in many products that you consume. It is there so that excess moisture does not cause the ingredients listed above to spoil.

OVERALL THOUGHTS:

If you don't want your body to process so much starch and sugar, don't eat it!! Instead of taking 4 pills so that you can enjoy 5 candy bars a day. Don't eat 5 candy bars!! My philosophy is simple, moderation! There are good carbs that you can consume and there are bad ones. There are good sugars and bad sugars. If you don't want to have to take a pill to limit how your body processes them, eat less of them!! Pretty simple right!

Resources consulted:

Plexus Worldwide

Global Healing Center

Live Strong

E How

Plexus - Vitoria Sylvest

The following statement is posted in the weight loss section of the PlexusWorldwide website: "Finally, there is a healthy solution to help you lose weight. The synergistic effect of Plexus Slim and Accelerator+ taken together can help you lose more weight faster than you ever thought possible! Combined with the other Plexus weight loss products, you can experience quick results and keep the weight off." However, they...oopsie... *forgot* to mention that you must take this for the remainder of your life in order to "keep the weight off." That is, if you lost any weight to begin with.

I have several family members and friends that are/were ambassadors or took PS. Most of them are no longer using it because of one or more of the following three things: the high cost, the lack of results, or the horrible side effects. Side effects include nausea, jitters, dizziness, constant dull headaches, heartburn, nervousness, dull chest pain, and lots of gas! NO THANK YOU!! Many people try PS as a "Quick Fix" after attempting other fad diets and failing -only to fail again.

There are a few controversial ingredients in PS, including the CHEMICAL dimethylamylamine. This chemical can look like amphetamines and cause you to read "positive" on a drug test. Web MD states, "Dimethylamylamine is considered a drug in Canada is not permitted in dietary supplements or natural health products.

Many athletes take dimethylamylamine to improve performance. However, dimethylamylamine was added to the World Anti-Doping Agency's prohibited substances list for 2010. Therefore, competitive athletes should avoid taking it. Due to safety concerns, dimethylamylamine has been temporarily removed from military stores in the US. It has also been banned in New Zealand. Its use has been linked to several reports of serious, life-threatening side effects." Again, NO, THANK YOU!

Also, the PS Pink Drink can no longer be bought from Amazon.com because dimethylamylamine is a banned chemical on the site. I looked it up, and could only find the Bio Cleanse Base & Accelerator.

The monthly cost for these chemical "weight loss" drinks and pills ranges from \$115 - \$235. It usually takes about 6 months to get full results from using PS, which would total to \$690 - \$1,410. Again, NO, THANK YOU!

I believe I'll stick to my drug/chemical free, whole foods approach to eating and add in some exercise! It sounds so simple, because it is! Now THIS is something I can do for a lifetime, without having to fill my body with toxins and spend an arm and a leg *or TWO legs* on purchasing a "miracle fix" that fixes Nothing!

Raw Foodism - Kandice Keegan

"Raw foodism is the practice of consuming uncooked, unprocessed, and often organic foods as a large percentage of the diet." While consuming raw vegetables and fruit is healthy, raw foodists take it to the extreme. These fad diets we are researching are about taking extreme measures to lose weight or to achieve optimal health, but they usually end up leaving key nutrients out of the diet to get the results you want more quickly.

One of the key ingredients our bodies need to thrive is animal protein. Some who follow this diet only use protein in moderation while others leave it out completely. "Animal protein is the only reliable source that contains all the essential amino acids" which are needed for cellular repair. Eating animal protein can boost the metabolism by as much as 25%. If we replaced it with non-animal protein, in order to get the same protein content as a chicken breast, one would need to consume: 7 Cups of brown rice, or 2 cups of beans, or mix the two to get a complete protein serving. An article that I just read claims that many raw foodists must supplement to receive proper nutrition. Raw foodism is also associated with tooth decay and strange bowel habits...No thanks! God has designed food to be enjoyed and for us to consume it in a balanced way.

Sensa - Laurie Orozco

The one Fad~Diet that I have heard about and even tried was on the radio, Sensa! The Sensa diet is little crystals...This is a shaker that you sprinkle on your food...(like you would sprinkle salt), you get 2...one for Sweet things and one for Salty...This curbs your appetite...They claim that this will gradually reduce your craving for food that is unhealthy. The Sensa crystals claim to be safe for heart problems. As I read the reviews, some of the reviews said that their hearts were racing, and added to higher blood sugar. As I researched they say that some of the side effects were itchy and swelling of the skin. When you go to the website: It says it is safe by the USFOOD/DRUG ADM. Sensa does not itself contain any sodium or sugar. Sensa contains soy and milk products. Personally, sprinkling little crystals on my food, for a high dollar \$\$ amount is not being wise or frugal with the money I am blessed with, (NOT A Good Steward with the money God has blessed me with.) It's a quick fix. There were lots of good results stating some lost lots of

weight...I never did! I know of a friend who did it too, and she didn't...the difference between any of these fad/diets....IS it is just a fad! We must strive to do 2 things in life when it comes to food choices...It healthy food, that God intended for us to eat....and not MAN, also work into our schedule 64oz of water...and exercise...then when we do that we aren't doing quick fad diets...we are striving to take care of the Body, God created and using it for HIS HONOR & GLORY!

Shakeology - Bethany Odero

I have a friend at work who uses the powder to make the shakes (she's not doing it to lose weight, just to get added nutrients). It's a meal replacement product by BeachBody designed to replace a meal with a shake using their powder, (which supposedly has over 70 nutritious ingredients, help detoxify and protect the body against free radical damage, help fight food cravings, and even helps support a healthy libido) and add your choice of liquid (water, milk, soy, almond milk), fruits, BP or veggies. The mix comes with a variety of recipes to make easy and fast shakes. Most of the shakes have 120-160 calories, depending on what you had to them. Yes, there will be quick weight loss seen because of the decrease in calories eaten for that meal, but is it really sustainable. What happens when you run out of the powder or can't afford to buy more or if you go out of town and can't bring it with you. I have done other meal replacement products before and it left me nothing but starving for my next meal and the fact that I tended to over eat at the next meal because I was so hungry! Any weight I did lose, I gained back because it wasn't a lifestyle to change, it was something I did for 3 months or 6 months and saw quick and not lasting results. The next real question is, what product of any kind really has over 70 nutritious ingredients that are good and clean for you? I love FIT because it really is a life style change. By eating real whole food...I'm left feeling satisfied after each meal and not dying or counting down the hours until I can eat again.

Shakeology - Heather Teate

SHAKEOLOGY – THE DOCTRINE OF TOXINS

The following information may open a can of worms, but trust me – you are better off eating worms than you are ingesting shakeology. Anyone researching the tapeworm diet? Ha!

Shakeology makes A LOT of claims that sound amazing:

“A world of superfood in every glass.”

“Clinically proven to help you.”

“The world’s greatest value in nutrition.”

“The world’s healthiest shake.”

“Grown in nature.”

“The best on the market.”

“No artificial flavors.”

“Soy free.”

“Expert Rating: 8.2 out of 10”

Wow! Sounds like the CURE for cancer! Truthfully, it is everything BUT the cure. It is the CAUSE! Sounds brazen right? Read on.

It costs \$120 for a 30 day supply. After taxes and shipping/handling it comes to \$4 per serving. While health nuts shake their heads and such a ghastly price, if it did everything it says it does, you couldn't pay enough! After all, you can't put a price on good health.

When you google shakeology, your findings will be mostly positive and many health websites promote the product. One of the leading 'health review websites' rates it #5 as the healthiest shake on the market. Comparing chemicals...er...um...I mean, apples to apples, fifth place sounds pretty good when you consider the thousands of companies competing for a place in the top ten. The reason shakeology didn't make it as #1 is because it was found to have "high calories/high sugars/high price/poor taste." But the reviews were quick to pump up the fact that it had "exotic ingredients." EXOTIC is an exciting word that really means it came from another country. What would be more accurate is to say it came from a lab. You mean the 70 different ingredients weren't picked fresh from the mountains and jungles of China and Peru like we are led to believe? Nada!

Shakeology offers 6 flavors: Chocolate, Vanilla, Strawberry, Greenberry, Tropical Strawberry Vegan

They all sound delicious and the nutrition label appears CRAZY HEALTHY! Ready to sign up and be a distributor? Let's look a tad closer first...

The largest vitamin content in shakeology is Vitamin A...no wait...beta carotene. They are the same right? Wrong! Natural Vitamin A will fight cancer and boost your immune system. Synthetic Vitamin A (beta carotene) has been PROVEN to increase cancer cells! If you look at the ginormous list of vitamins on the package, you will see parentheses following almost each one. So the 23 essential vitamins and minerals didn't come from the earth as you are led to believe. Pour some liquid and shakeology in a vial over ice baby and you are just another lab rat! Now that is VILE!

FYI - Ascorbic acid is not Vitamin C. Alpha tocopherol is not Vitamin E. Retinoic acid is not Vitamin A. And so on and so forth with the other vitamins. These purified synthetics are artificial and act as drugs to the body. To call them vitamins is inaccurate. Shakeology contains these drugs.

Fun Fact: Over 90% of ascorbic acid in the US is manufactured at a facility in New Jersey and owned by one of the world's biggest drug manufacturers. Here ascorbic acid is made from a process involving cornstarch and volatile acids. Most vitamin companies buy it in bulk and make their own labels, formulations and each claims to have the superior form of Vitamin C, even though it all came from the same place...and it's not really Vitamin C at all.

Synthetic means "man-made; occurs nowhere in nature."

Synthetic vitamins are highly inferior to vitamins from natural sources and the synthetic product is well known to be far more toxic.

50% of Americans are deficient in Vitamin A and 41% are deficient in Vitamin C. Synthetic vitamins cannot prevent deficiencies! Does it still sound exotic to know that synthetic vitamin B comes from coal tar? How about vitamin B12, which comes from activated sewage sludge? All commercial lecithins in supplements, as well as most vitamin D, come from irradiated vegetable oils (rancid, oxidizing trans fatty acids).

Shakeology is "fortified" and "enriched" because it is DEAD.

Shaken up yet? Still wanna pay \$4 per serving for a bag of dead chemicals?

It gets better...

The higher the potency of the synthetic vitamin, the more the druglike effects are present. Natural whole food vitamins are very low in potency. One potato that contains 20 mg of Vitamin C cured a patient of scurvy. High potency overshoots the mark. So why is it recommended to use shakeology (full of high potent synthetic vitamins) for at least five months for the best results? Because it's a DRUG! Drugs can be measured in milligrams because they are refined and potent chemicals. Milligrams have nothing to do with vitamin activity or nutrition except in a negative. Makes you look at the nutrition label in a whole new way right?

At best, Shakeology contains vitamins that are worthless. The worst is toxic.

(Most of the research facts are from www.thedoctorwithin.com. I highly recommend this sight for quality info. Just don't read it before bed. You may experience nightmares!)

Slim Fast - Ashley Frey

A few people have already addressed it, but I come with personal failure. This diet makes you think that you have to eat very few calories if you want any real success. Before my wedding in March I tried doing this diet. What you do is replace 2 full meals with protein bars or drinks and then you eat "small" snacks in between to make 5-6 small meals a day. Which in reality sounds like what you have been told all your life. But the sad fact is that Slim Fast does not give your body any actual nutritional value, but rather packs you full of sugars and processed filler foods. My small snacks turned in to binge eating. And forget actually doing remotely good if you're a binge eater when you're stressed. This diet puts your body under so much stress from lack of caloric intake. I would finish the day and try to go to the gym and wouldn't even have the energy to get on the elliptical. Eating less calories of terrible food that is packed full of sugar and unnatural filler is absolutely terrible for you. I am so happy I joined this challenge to show myself that I CAN eat real food and lose weight!

Slim Fast - Sherrice Jones

I decided to pick Slim Fast as my research topic. With Slim Fast, you eat two Slimfast meal replacements (shakes or bars), 3 - 100 calorie snacks and one 500 calorie meal of your own choosing. So that would mean you're eating about 1200 calories per day.

Calorie wise not bad but my goodness how hungry you get on this "diet!" I was starving all the time and it even got to where my throat would close up when trying to down the shakes. The snacks were lifeless and I got no enjoyment from even eating them. It was also horrible for my diabetes! Talk about blood sugars out of control! I did lose some weight but then got sick due to blood sugar highs and lack of nutrients.

Now thanks to FIT, I am stuffing myself with fresh, low carb, vegetables, I am off all insulin (only on one oral med now), have more energy than ever before, enjoying eating fresh fruit (mainly berries), and slowly but steadily losing 1-2 lbs a week. What a difference real food has made in my life! Now I can't wait to go for my annual checkup and see what my new A1C reading is now!

SlimQuick - Melissa Armstrong

My fad diet is a personal testimony... I was weighing in at 201.0 pounds back in 2004! And this was before prego. Well I was like every lazy American who wanted a quick fix. Started taking slim quick, took for 6 months lost 25 pounds, but ate whatever I wanted didn't work out. It started messing with my health, stop taking it and then faster than you could say FAT and UNHEALTHY that 25 came back less than 6 months. If you read what could happen you wouldn't take this, it can cause a lot of health issue and it lies to your hormones and messes them up when taking and after. Don't mess with what God made! So fast

forward to July 2006 when I met the love of my life and he was honest with me about my weight and introduced me to his step mom which gave me a book to read (which is a great resource for FIT!) I lost 50 pounds! Got married at a healthy 135, but you get lazy and I didn't make it a lifestyle change. I have kept off 50 pounds after 2 prego's but was doing it the wrong way and wanted to get back to my 135 maybe 130! Then God led me to FIT! And I am changing my lifestyle slowly but forever!

South Beach Diet - Rebecca Trieber

I tried getting my report on the South Beach Diet shorter but for all you talkers out there, you know how difficult this is!

I have never been on a diet before FIT so I don't have a personal, passionate experience to share about a diet that did not work. As I was looking up diets I realized that just like everything out there, almost every diet contained some element of good. Just enough not to be able to see the "bad" in the diet. After all, they want to make money & people need to lose weight. When I was checking out the South Beach diet I couldn't help but share my findings with you all. I am dumbfounded by the false advertisements on their meal plan foods.

I went to their website with an open mind as though I would use their diet. After all, I didn't want to be biased in my "attack" against their weight loss plan. It's never smart to be a bandwagon person, in either direction. I clicked on the question "Do the products contain sugar substitutes? And their answer was, "South Beach Diet products DO NOT contain any artificial sweeteners or sugar alcohols." I couldn't believe it so I tried to Google for their ingredients list. Nothing but their nutrition facts popped up. Thanks to FIT I know the ingredients lists is what I should be looking for. I headed out to Safeway and me and the grocery guy searched all over the store for South Beach Diet products. Most have been taken off the shelves. We finally found a few boxes among the diabetic section near the medication! My eyeballs flew to that ingredients list like I was the FBI (after all it was 10:30pm tonight & I snuck out of the house to find out what South Beach was up to haha). I got a picture of the evidence. Want to know what I found? 5 artificial sweeteners amongst a bunch of other empty ingredients & additives! Sugar, Fructose, oligofructose, cane syrup, lactose, and dextrose. Get this, on the front of the box it said NO ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS OR SWEETENERS. I thought, "What do they take us for? A bunch of dummies!?" Yep. And they about got it right. I know personally that I am "dumb" to so many things I let other people put in my mouth and tell me is good for me. They expect women to see their website proclaiming no added sugars and then proceed as though it's just got to be because they said so!

Their website says, "Our food is delicious, heart-healthy, diabetic friendly, and easy to prepare." Too much sugar can lead to heart disease and a plethora of other health issues as we all know too well. The website also says their food will help eliminate cravings for sugary foods. Not if you choose to eat their foods! If you are eating their foods with all the added sugar, you are still going to be addicted to sugar. Maybe they're counting on you believing their "fact" that they do not use any artificial sweeteners? Fructose, which they have two forms in their meal bars, feeds CANCER CELLS, triggers WEIGHT GAIN, and promotes premature aging. For a company that has your best interest at heart for your health & weight loss, the numbers just aren't adding up. I'm sure if I keep on digging I would find more inconsistencies but I've seen enough. I don't trust a company that will BOLDLY lie about what is in the product.

Just like all the other diets out there, the "downside" hidden throughout their plans, meals, shakes, etc. far outweighs what good little eating plan, calorie counting etc. it may contain. It is NOT to be compared to the food God created in all of His perfection. You don't have to look at the ingredients list on the side of the red bell pepper. It's all good. Nothing in it is bad for you. God knew what he was doing when he made us humans and created the perfect food to go along with us!

Special K Diet - Kristen Mendonca

1st. You really got to love cereal. lol Eating it twice a day. 2nd. Got to love it, they have drinks and snacks for you!!!! One of the girls at work love drinking the drink so I decided one day to look at the ingredients.... It's NOT FIT approved for sure. All the different sugars and additives... Holy Cow!!!! Now I'm sure you will lose some weight and inches but for sure you will gain it back when you're back eating full meals instead of cereal. This diet is a bandaid for weight loss!!!! For real changes it needs to be a lifestyle. What I have learned through this challenge is some people can run with it and make those changes so easily and for some of us it's hard to push through. I might fall off the wagon more than I like to, but as long as I can get back up I haven't been defeated. I might not make my goals I stated in the first week of this challenge, but I am better than I was before I started.

Special K Diet - Jessica Oberg

I have personally tried this one. It offers a variety of yummy things to eat and snack on. It never worked for me personally because like so many other fad diets it was to eat good so I can indulge later. I never felt full or satisfied following this diet. I was always wanting more. Even though their snacks were yummy they were filled with sugar. It seems to give you a quick fix but not a change of lifestyle unlike FIT. Plus, eating the same thing all the time can get boring and when I get bored I eat whatever there is. Usually not healthy.

"Starvation" Diet - Kara Collins

Fad diet I've chosen is "starvation" simply meaning - NOT eating your necessary suggested calories. It seems that several of my food entries have been below my caloric limit. I want to make healthy choices and try to feel full on eating smaller portions resulting in fewer calories. The information I've read/heard about is that when you aren't eating enough calories that your body goes into storage mode and the metabolism slows down. In other words, your body holds onto fat in order to sustain itself through this period of starvation and resists weight loss. I'm realizing that my body needs smaller, more frequent meals/snacks to keep my system running more efficiently and my calorie level more at the normal range. Of course, Exercise!!!!

Subway Diet - Jodie Fluegge

Who doesn't love Subway? Well, I'm sure there are many who don't, but there are also a lot of people out there that would love to have a diet of Subway sandwiches every day that allows them to lose weight. And Jared "The Subway Guy" who lost approximately 245 pounds by eating Subway for lunch and dinner every day has elevated Subway to the status of a "healthy" choice. But is it really healthy? And is it really a diet that is sustainable?

Jared Fogle was a college student in 1998 who led a very unhealthy lifestyle. According to a New York Daily News interview done in 2013, he frequented McDonalds and Chinese buffets and consumed extreme amounts of soda daily. That all changed when he bought a Subway sandwich, and as they say, the rest is history. But is that really all there is to the story? Can you really eat a Subway sandwich twice a day and lose crazy amounts of weight AND keep it off? When you look at current pictures of Jared Fogle, it's certainly a convincing picture.

Take another look at his story.

Jared Fogle didn't lose weight because he ate Subway twice a day, which is the way it is promoted.

He lost weight because he made HUGE lifestyle changes. Jared Fogle went from an exorbitantly unhealthy lifestyle filled with calories and unhealthy sugars and fats to a lifestyle of eating healthier than he had before, and then eventually, added exercise. When you calculate his calories before he started the

“Subway Diet”, it adds up to an astounding 4,000+ calories-and that was just for one meal and his soda addiction! Granted, that was only his McDonald’s meals, and he didn’t necessarily go there every day. However, one can only imagine what his other meals looked like. His calorie count after he started the “Subway Diet”? His lunch and dinner calories equaled anywhere between 1,000 and 1,250 calories. Add in the benefits of exercising (a 1.5 mile walk every day in his case) and his lifestyle was DRASTICALLY different!!!

The “Subway Diet” certainly worked for Jared Fogle; he lost tons of weight and appears to have kept it off for 15 years, although there are reports he has fluctuated across the years (but then, who hasn’t?).

Here is why I think the Subway Diet is not a good way to lose weight:

1) It is cost prohibitive. Jared Fogle was spending at least \$15 a day on his meals. I don’t know about you, but I can’t really afford to pay \$15 a day for my meals.

2) It is not healthy in a nutritional sense. Eating Subway every day may allow you to get your vegetables in, but there is very little nutritional variety. He skipped breakfast every day, drinking only coffee instead. Our bodies require a mix of vitamins and minerals, calories, carbs, fats, and sugars throughout the day in order to function well.

3) Eating at the same place (and the same thing!) every day is unsustainable for the average person. I personally require variety in my eating habits-otherwise I get bored with what I am eating. Variety is the spice of life!!!

4) Everyone is different. What worked for Jared the Subway Guy may not work for Average Joe/Jane. The basic principles of low calories, better nutritional values, and frequent exercise are effective; but we are not cookie cutter humans-we are individuals, each with our own needs and desires that must be balanced in a way that works for us.

Subway touts Jared Fogle “The Subway Guy” as an excellent example of someone who ate their food day in and day out and lost weight doing it So you can do it too!!! Well, things are rarely that simple in life. Just like with any other diet fad out there, there are no guarantees and it may be detrimental to you.

Tapeworm Diet - Deborah Hargrave

The diet that I did some research on was the tapeworm diet. Yes that's right people swallow the head of a tapeworm in the form of a pill to lose weight. It's totally insane to me but the articles I found said that it was very popular in the early 60's. I am sure before a lot of research was done on the effects of diets like this. The articles I read said that the tapeworms can get up to 30 feet long. Yuck! The things we will do to lose a few pounds.

Tapeworm Diet - Kirsten Ostrander

This is a truly nasty weight-loss strategy! Purportedly, deliberately ingesting a tapeworm will help you lose weight magically. This idea has been around for over a century, and, unfortunately, some people are still falling for the lie.

Tapeworms usually enter the human body through uncooked or undercooked meat, contact with infected feces, or consuming other foods which contain tapeworms. Once ingested, the tapeworm will travel through your digestive tract and attach itself along the way to your stomach, intestines, or other organs, feeding off the very food you've ingested to fuel your body. Presumably, the tapeworm will consume enough calories that you will notice a loss of weight, since your body will now, presumably, begin burning excess fat in order to power itself. Once you've dropped enough weight, you can take a pill that will kill the tapeworm, allowing your body to naturally expel it.

There are soooo many things wrong with this "diet," it's hard to know where to start! (1) Ingesting a foreign object for ANY reason without a doctor's approval is simply dangerous. Don't we always tell our kids, "Don't put that in your mouth!"? Some foreign objects in the body are permissible and medically necessary (i.e., pacemakers, artificial knees, steel pins), but consciously ingesting a parasite that could potentially harm you in order to drop a few pounds is just plain stupid! (2) There is no guarantee that the tapeworm will consume enough calories to offset the amount of calories you consume. Sure, it sounds plausible, in a way. What a wonderful, effortless weight loss routine! You eat 2000 calories each day; you get half, and the tapeworm gets half. Voila! Instant weight loss, right? Having a tapeworm may cause you to drop some weight, but there are also reports of tapeworm-infested people who were hungrier than usual and actually gained weight while infested. (3) The tapeworm is not an object you can control. It usually attaches itself somewhere along the digestive tract, but it can instead attach itself to another organ or travel via the blood into unwanted areas, possibly even the brain---which could kill you. (4) Tapeworms may even cause vitamin deficiencies. Tapeworms do not just eat empty calories; they will feed off whatever they choose, potentially robbing you of much-needed nutrients. (5) Being infected with a tapeworm may have other unpleasant side effects. These include abdominal pain, weakness, nausea, bloating, constipation, headache, and diarrhea. Plus, since the tapeworm is a live organism residing inside your digestive tract---and is continually growing while inside you---you may actually feel it moving around inside you! Yikes! Watching your belly move when you're nine months pregnant is exciting; watching your belly move when you're carrying a live parasite is gross! (6) By ingesting this parasite, you are putting your health at risk just to drop some unwanted pounds. Why would someone deliberately jeopardize their health---and maybe their life---in such a drastic way? If an overweight individual is so desperate to change their figure, they need to consider making changes to their eating and their exercise level, not swallowing a live parasite. And, if said individual truly thinks such a drastic decision is the best solution, they probably have bigger issues that need to be dealt with.

There's a sad story that aired last year about a mother who mistakenly thought the best way to help her teenage daughter lose extra pounds before a beauty pageant was to feed her tapeworm pills. A few weeks later, the mom rushed her daughter to the emergency room with a swollen stomach and extreme abdominal pain. It was discovered that there was SOMETHING in her intestinal tract. Suddenly the girl rushed to the bathroom where she could be heard screaming. A nurse ran to assist her and discovered that the toilet bowl was full of wriggling tapeworms! Once the initial scare was over and the doctors were sure all the tapeworms had been expelled/killed, the question became "how did she ingest the tapeworms to begin with?" Upon hearing this, the mom turned white and admitted she had bought the tapeworm pills in Mexico and had fed them to her daughter to help her lose weight before the beauty pageant. She said she just wanted to help her daughter "get a little skinnier."

I actually read an article that postulated the theory that before all this civilization and fully-cooked meats and hygiene, our bodies regularly hosted innumerable parasites which happily fed off of us---and we survived. Now that cleaner personal habits and better cooking processes have replaced the caveman days, our bodies miss these parasites and our immune systems are out-of-balance. As if we need tapeworms to be healthy! Bah!

Seriously, the lengths to which some people will go in order to lose a few quick pounds is ridiculous. It would be awesome if all we needed to do to lose weight is to encase ourselves in plastic wrap and or take a magic pill and watch the fat melt away. However, in real life, it's not that easy. It takes getting up off the couch and exercising; it takes watching every morsel that goes into your mouth because it will never end up on the hips if it doesn't pass through the lips. (That's kind of catchy!) I so appreciate Monica's desire to be healthier and to help other ladies achieve optimum health as well. This is a lifestyle, yes, but it's also a healthy choice, one that I'm glad I made!

Three-Day Diet - Bethany Abundo

The diet, aimed at people wanting to lose a lot of weight, claims you'll drop up to 10 pounds if you follow it for three days.

The menu consists of three breakfasts, lunches, and "dinners" -- if you consider a cup of tuna fish or two hot dogs, plus fruit and vegetable sides, dinner.

One web site that markets the diet claims it's "chemically and enzyme balanced," though this statement isn't explained or supported.

One thing is clear: You won't be eating much. On Day 1, you get just 870 calories. Days 2 and 3 aren't much different.

For three days, you'll eat extremely basic meals made with foods you may already have in your kitchen.

For example, breakfast on Day 1 is black coffee or water, half a grapefruit, and a slice of toast with a tablespoon of peanut butter. Lunch is half a cup of tuna, another slice of toast, and another cup of black coffee (or tea or water).

If you're looking for variety or foodie thrills, you won't find them here.

Lunch on Day 2, for instance, is nothing but a cup of cottage cheese and some saltine crackers. Sauces, dressings, and even spices are off the list. If you have a sweet tooth, though, you'll be happy to find vanilla ice cream on the menu each day.

And Exercise? It's frowned on because, as one web site puts it, "you will not be feeling very energetic" while you're on this diet.

I've tried this diet twice. Each time, I hated it. Had a headache EVERY SINGLE DAY! So I took Tylonol every day. I pretty much starved the whole 3 days. I always felt so weak and had a difficult time doing anything but eat and sit around and maybe do something if my son needed something, then I was an absolute crabbybutt to my husband. Yeah, he isn't a fan of this diet either...and what's really said, I never, EVER lost 10 lbs with this stupid diet. This group has been amazing for me. My husband has noticed a difference and does the lifestyle food change with me...yeah, I've only lost 8lbs so far, but that the lost I've ever lost since I started on my rocky weight loss journey. And the fact that I AM losing weight has boosted my confidence in a major way...ahem! Hubby is so happy about that too! *wink wink* This group has changed the way I look at food...I don't consider myself "on a diet" anymore...it's a lifestyle change that I am really enjoying now. I will never go back!!

Three-Day Refresh - Penny Jackson

I was just watching the morning news and one of the advertisements that came on was for a diet called "3 Day Refresh". Supposedly you can lose 5-12 pounds in 3 days. The part that bothered me the most is that it is being advertised by a medical doctor.

Of course people believe it when a medical doctor is telling them it will work. On top of that it costs \$150 for 3 days and that is with a 50% off sale. Prior to FIT I would have believed it; probably not bought it but would have wanted to.

I am definitely a work in progress as far as losing all the weight I want to, but all of the wonderful FIT ladies have changed my thinking.

Trim Healthy Mama - Julianne Harrell

For my fad diet research I have chosen to research Trim Healthy Mama. Basically, you can't mix carbs and fats together. If you eat carbs one meal, the next meal you can have fats but just not both together. The first time I heard of it, I was confused and it just didn't seem natural to me or make sense. They encourage fake foods like Egg Beaters, low-carb pasta, and Reddi-Whip in their recipes and discourage foods like peanuts because they have both fats and carbs in them. They promote the use of unnatural sweeteners while discouraging the use of honey. Wait. What?!?!?! While these are just a few of the issues that stood out to me, I'm sure there are some good things as well. It's really simple: Eat good, whole foods, limit your sugar intake, and exercise is all you need to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Weight Watchers - Becky McComas

If you use it and lose the weight and as soon as you stop it and put the weight back on it is considered a "Fad diet" to me. First off the food is processed and covered with a diuretic. I personally have experienced this because I was dating my husband and decided to "diet" and then he proposed to me and I was wanting to lose a lot of weight for our wedding. Well it did work I went from a size 24 to a size 8. From October of 2006 to June of 2007 and then went off the diet after we were married because I was moving and overseas and not think it would have the meals. So I quit it and gained a lot of it back and even more so when I wasn't able to eat very much without running to the bathroom all the time. When I went gluten free in 2009 I finally was able to eat foods again, but just because it's gluten free doesn't mean it's all good for you, but I had to figure out from FIT how to balance gluten free and eating right it is working out! So here's to fit 11.5 lbs gone and 7 inches all around down!!!

Werewolf Diet - Erica Gardner

So the diet I chose to research is the Werewolf Diet, also known as the Moon Diet or Lunar Diet. When someone mentioned this the other day, the name piqued my interest, so I thought why not.

The premise of this diet is that just as the moon affects the oceans tides, it also affects our bodies. More specifically the water contained in our bodies. So on the full moon and the new moon one must do a water and juice only fast and allow the toxins to be pulled from their bodies. (Pretty sure this is why God created the liver and kidneys!!!) The website states that you can lose 2-6 lbs of water weight with just the one day. That is the basic moon diet plan. Then there is the extended moon diet plan which is more rigorous. This follows the cycle of the moon. After fasting on the Full Moon day and only consuming water and fresh squeezed fruit or vegetable juice the next phase is the Waning Moon when you are supposed to eat a diet of balanced foods (The website doesn't really give any directives on what they consider to be a balanced diet) and drink lots of water to continue to flush the toxins and "to replace the water being pushed from your body by the moon's influence." Next comes the New Moon where again there is a 24 hour period of fasting and only drinking water, juice, and also detoxifying teas such as dandelion, sage and green tea. Next is the Waxing Moon when you are supposed to eat less than normal, avoid thickeners such as sweets and fats, and not eat after 6 p.m. This is the most difficult phase of the cycle and you are encouraged to exercise self-discipline. Then the cycle starts all over again.

Why I believe this diet would not work.

1. Most of the weight lost in the first phase is water weight which would mostly be gained back as soon as the person resumes eating solid food.
2. It is another fad diet that encourages restriction. While not all restriction is bad our bodies need all kinds of foods to stay healthy. Especially the foods that God made and as close to the way He made them as possible.
3. The thinking that the moon can help us lose weight and affects the way our body works seems somewhat farfetched to me.

4. It is not sustainable in the long run. Who wants to check the lunar calendar before they eat, fast twice a month, and not get to eat after 6 for days in row.

I am so thankful for FIT and what it stands for. I am enjoying my Lifestyle change.

Werewolf Diet - Belinda Midyette

It seems that this "diet" is a lunar calendar-based eating plan and is gaining popularity among celebrities. The premise is that the moon influences the water in our bodies in the same way it influences the tides of the ocean. There are two options, according to the website Moon Connection. The basic version involves a day of fasting during a full or new moon, in which case you drink only water and juice. This supposedly cleanses your body of toxins and can help you lose up to six pounds of water weight in one day. The extended version, meanwhile, starts with that day-long fast and continues with specific eating plans for each moon phase. (For example, during the waxing moon, you're supposed to eat less; during the waning moon, you're not supposed to eat after 6 p.m., when moonlight starts to become visible.)

Keri Glassman, M.S.,R.D., a member of Women's Health's advisory board does acknowledge that the moon's phases do affect our bodies—but only to an extent. "I think it's something to be aware of: that everything in life is connected and that even the phases of the moon might affect our sleep and our hunger and our PMS cravings and emotional cravings," she says. That said, the effect isn't so great that you should actually rethink the way you eat during different times of the month. What's more, fasting isn't the smartest idea—it can set you up for binges—and the Werewolf Diet's claims that you can lose up to six pounds in a day simply aren't realistic, says Glassman.

You're better off sticking to a more regular healthy-eating plan, maintaining an exercise routine, and staying far away from fairy tales, such as this bogus fad diet.

ViSalus - Robyn Donough

You may have seen the "Body by Vi" memes, bumper stickers, and flyers. I've seen it on Facebook and personally know someone who uses it and has lost a significant amount of weight. She posts the photos of her shakes and how scrumptious they are, along with before and after photos. She messaged me about it a couple years ago, so I decided then to do a quick Google search of the ingredients. It was a long list of things I couldn't pronounce and immediately knew it wasn't something I would be interested in, but the common ingredients that they boast of using are red flags in and of themselves.

When uploading the web page, I saw the long list of healthy claims including: low fat, low sodium, low sugar, low carb, lactose free, and gluten free. That sounds fantastic! You mean I could have something that healthy for me that doesn't taste like I'm chewing on packing peanuts? Awesome! As I read further, I saw four ingredients that ViSalus is very proud of: whey protein, soy, sucralose, and Fibersol.

Why whey? "Whey protein can help curb hunger and is concentrated to provide higher amounts of protein and yield fewer carbs and fat." Sounds simple enough, but right off, I wonder why we need supplemental protein. There's protein in many tasty foods that can be found in any grocery store and can also curb hunger because, well, you're eating. Also, that word "concentrated" reads to me as "manufactured" and not a natural form. When doing a search, I found that whey is listed as "likely safe" on mayoclinic.org, but they go on to say:

Allergic reactions (including diarrhea, failure to thrive, infant colic, rash, and vomiting) have been reported with exposure to whey.

Whey protein is likely safe for most adults when used in amounts recommended by the manufacturer.

Whey protein is possibly safe when taken by mouth as a single dose of up to 50 grams, or when 30 grams is taken by mouth daily for six months.

Whey protein may cause abnormal heart rhythms, changes in cholesterol levels, headache, increased diabetes risk, increased fracture or osteoporosis risk, kidney dysfunction, liver damage, stomach or intestine symptoms (acid reflux, bloating, constipation, cramps, gas, increased bowel movements, movement problems, nausea, reduced appetite, swelling of limbs, and upset stomach), and thirst.

Whey protein may lower blood sugar levels. Caution is advised in people with diabetes or low blood sugar, and in those taking drugs, herbs, or supplements that affect blood sugar. Blood sugar levels may need to be monitored by a qualified healthcare professional, including a pharmacist, and medication adjustments may be necessary.

Whey protein may increase the risk of bleeding. Caution is advised in people with bleeding disorders or in those taking drugs that may increase the risk of bleeding. Dosing adjustments may be necessary.

Whey protein may interfere with the way the body processes certain drugs using the liver's "cytochrome P450" enzyme system.

Whey protein may cause low blood pressure. Caution is advised in people with low blood pressure or in those taking drugs or herbs and supplements that lower blood pressure.

Drowsiness or sedation may occur. Use caution if driving or operating heavy machinery.

Use cautiously in people who take medications, including agents that affect the immune system and agents that lower cholesterol.

Use cautiously in people with stomach or intestine disorders.

Avoid in people with known allergy or sensitivity to milk or milk products, including cow's milk, sheep's milk, goat's milk, and mare's milk.

Avoid in people who are avoiding the use of dairy products.

Avoid using whey protein long-term and in excessive amounts.

That's a long list of side effects that I'm not interested in experiencing simply so I don't have to make myself a healthy meal. And the last line stating, "avoid using whey protein long-term and in excessive amounts"? People are using Visalus for YEARS at a time.

Why soy? "Soy helps improve muscle performance." Interesting. Soy is fine in condimental uses as done in Asian cultures where it is fermented, but using it as a supplement and in place of other foods in your diet is dangerous to your thyroid function as well as to your reproductive health, including fetal/infant reproductive development. Soy contains phytoestrogens which mimic the body's natural estrogen hormones. These foods lower testosterone in men, increase the risk of breast cancer, and accelerate puberty. When used in formula, studies have shown that soy harms the reproductive system in female infants in the form of "delayed vaginal opening . . . decreased fertility." Side note, a baby consuming only soy formula is consuming the equivalent of 4 birth control pills a day. But, by all means, please use soy to help improve muscle performance.

Why sucralose? "Studies have shown that Sucralose is a safe and effective sugar substitute, making the product friendly for those watching their sugar intake, and approved for use in over 80 countries." Visalus claims that more than 100 studies conducted over a 20-year period have demonstrated the safety of

sucralose as a sweetener.” Their facts page shows a photo of well-known brands that contain sucralose: Special K, Quaker Oats granola bars, Muscle Milk, V-8, and SlimFast – none of these are healthy, though so many people trying to lose weight use these products. We believed sucralose to be safe, but the key is that it was being used WHILE also being studied. More recent studies show sucralose to be harmful to our bodies. TruthAboutSplenda.com lists these dangers as:

- Gastrointestinal problems
- Seizures, dizziness, and migraines
- Blurred vision
- Allergic reactions
- Blood sugar increases and weight gain

Prevention.com says that sucralose reduces good gut bacteria, makes meds less effective, releases toxins (when baked, it decomposes, releasing those toxins into your food), and may alter your body’s responses (blood sugar levels). Furthermore, sucralose has been found in drinking water as it is not being broken down by the chemical water treatment process (Mercola.com). If our bodies cannot process it and chemicals cannot dilute it, why are we putting it into our bodies in the first place? Sucralose is manufactured under the Splenda name. “Tastes like sugar, because it’s made from sugar” is the catchphrase, but we know that sugar is already overly processed, so sucralose is taken even further. Scientists found that by replacing one part of a sugar molecule with chlorine, it produced a product 600 times sweeter than sugar. Sucralose is created in a lab and not grown anywhere in nature in pure form. There are no sucralose plants. Oddly enough, you can find maple trees, stevia plants, and honeycombs.

Why Fibersol? “Our fiber is clinically supported to help promote a healthy digestive tract.” I see. So since all these other products have the potential to ruin your gut health, they needed to add something back in that claims to support that. And notice the words “clinically supported.” The company that makes Fibersol says, “Fibersol-2 digestion resistant maltodextrin is a spray-dried powder produced by a proprietary method of controlled enzymatic hydrolysis of cornstarch.” Basically, Franken-fiber. Visalus was really talented at making that sound desirable. Please, go on and tell me how this is better than eating natural fibers found in fruits, whole grains, beans, and seeds.

At the bottom of the introductory page, a quote reads, “We value our science, but just as importantly, we value our success stories.” When I read that, it screamed, “We use people as science experiments!” Visalus is happy to use “science” to create mutant milkshakes and market the success stories. But are these really success stories? Behind them are human beings that were desperate to lose weight and found Visalus. They’ve lost weight, sure, but they’ve also compromised their overall health and never really learned how to use real food to become healthy. They’re living their lives believing that Visalus is their saving grace. In reality, anyone making real food smoothies for breakfast and/or lunch, eating healthy proteins, good fats, and fibers will have the same effects because, as always, Visalus encourages exercise and a healthy diet.

Sources used:

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Weight Watchers - Heather Brenenstuhl

So...Weight Watchers Diet...I've done it. In some form or other I've been on a diet for a long time...about 20 years now.

Pros-accountability. I loved the teacher in my WW group and it helped me to stay motivated

Fruits and veggies and "real foods" -while I know WW promotes their own products which have a lot of added ingredients; the leader I had was very in to real foods and that was what she really pushed (they were also considered low point foods or free foods)

Exercise -we were encouraged to do exercise every day

Cons-it was expensive to join and keep paying month by month

Foods-the WW foods themselves were expensive and not always the best for your body with the extra ingredients

Point system-while great for accountability at the time I was doing it nothing was done online-it was all handwritten as well as difficult to find points for foods

Sustainability-once the leader left (she went back to college) I struggled with motivation (not that you should put your personal motivation on another person-but the girl who came in after her wasn't as motivating nor as "real food" oriented.

That's what I love about FIT-I have the things that helped me with WW at 1/4 of the cost and real foods being pushed and plenty of encouragement everyday so that I am more motivated to keep on going!

Weight Watchers - Londie Grothjan

My diet research is Weight Watchers... I had been a "member" of weight watchers on and off since my daughter was born ten years ago, and while I did lose weight initially, I always put it back on when it was too difficult to make the meetings every week.

Pros: Accountability, emphasis on eating fruits and vegetables for "0" points (whatever that means as they do have calories...) Camaraderie with others in meeting. Good weight loss tips, recipes, and ideas, encouragement to exercise (or "move" as they put it). They did celebrate NSV with Bravo stickers, there is an app to track points, a visual tracking of your weight on your card when you weigh in...

Cons: I found that whenever I restarted Weight Watchers, many of the same people were still there--just as heavy--hmmm. I didn't like the camaraderie without Christ...meetings felt like an empty pep rally, Most of the foods they make are loaded with terrible unrecognizable additives--(I'm now a label reading fool!), I often justified my sweet cravings because I had enough "points", ANY liquid counts towards your water intake, having to go to a meeting to weigh in weekly, real support only once a week, not counting calories, same people losing the same 10-20 pounds all the time, very expensive...

I felt like WW is not necessarily "bad", just not "best". I like to see my calories on MFP...even my veggies/fruits! I like to know how much I am taking in and burning... You cannot beat the cost of FIT--I actually don't know how the Admins do it! And I am grateful! I LOVE the daily support of FIT--often Godly encouragement that reminds me why I am losing weight--to glorify God with my health, I love FIT's emphasis on whole foods--less additives--no sugar--I Love what FIT is doing for my family--helping me to help them to make better choices--trying new recipes. If I am honest, I also like the competition of FIT! To me WW was a bit of a gimmick--trying to figure out points etc...--but FIT is no nonsense, Christ-centered,

whole foods weight loss for life. I love that my maintenance will not look much different than my weight loss journey now--Thank you for helping me to form healthy habits that hopefully will pass to the next generation in my family.

Weight Watchers - Stephanie Perrette

I joined three different times, each time being several years apart. It always went the same. I started out excited, attending the weekly meetings and paying the weekly fee. I followed the plan, which wasn't too difficult, and I even lost weight. But within one to two months, I quit. Why? Partly because of the time involved in attending the meetings. Partly because of the expense, which we really could not afford. And partly because I never got UN addicted to sugar and unhealthy foods. The plan says you can have whatever you want as long as you budget for it. Of course they encourage you to eat fruits and veggies, but they really don't focus on getting rid of bad foods. And THEIR foods, which are a huge rip-off, are full of preservatives and unhealthy sweeteners. If you stick to the program you can lose weight, but you are just skinny and unhealthy instead of fat and unhealthy!

Zeal - Rebekah Farnsworth

Are you ready to lose weight? *Then be stuck on it lest you gain it all back.* Then try Zeal for Life! (It's in the title – Zeal FOR LIFE! Beware!)

In all seriousness, I researched Zeal for Life because I have had several people who have encouraged me to try it, boasting in its “Natural Ingredients” and “Tastiness”. The website info even includes, “Just ask somebody that’s been on Zeal Wellness for a few months how they feel!” I actually tried some when I was at a friend’s house because I wasn’t feeling that great and they said if I tried some of the vitamin C it would make me feel wonderful! It sure did! For about an hour until I crashed. Turns out, I (a person who hates the taste of coffee or energy drinks, and rarely consumes an occasional cup of hot tea,) had consumed Guarana. Guarana is, “a popular herb that contains ‘a caffeine-like substance’ called guaranine, which is like a chemical ‘1st cousin’ to caffeine.” (zealforlifeproducts .com) This threw up a red flag so I researched it a little more in depth than the Zeal for Life website. On Wikipedia, I found that it is “best known for the seeds from its fruit, which are about the size of a coffee seed” and that it is an “effective stimulant: its seeds contain about twice the concentration of caffeine found in coffee seeds (about 2-4.5% caffeine in guarana seeds compared to 1-2% for coffee seeds). TOO MUCH for this girl! In addition, Wikipedia goes on to say “As with other plants producing caffeine, the high concentration of caffeine is a defensive TOXIN that repels herbivores from the berry and its seeds.” (emphasis mine)

In conclusion, you could have page after page or research on this product. Some good things are to be found, some not-so-good things, but the bottom line is, why use a product that gives you a ‘short-cut’ to get benefits from things that you could just go out and eat on your own and reap, not only the benefits, but also the satisfaction and full belly. I love FIT because I can be in control of each and every bite of my food, and I can consume as little or as much caffeine as I want because it isn’t ground in to my supplement drink. Instead of having the levels of nutrients someone else has chosen for me, I can look and see myself what my food choices have been, and in the end, the only one accountable for those choices is me. Diets don't work. Eating REAL food and making WISE decisions is the way to live healthy.

Zeal - Donna Medeiros

I chose to look into Zeal as a friend of ours contacted me via instant messenger about 1 week prior to starting FIT. I had already made my mind up about joining this group, so I politely declined and mentioned my/our, (meaning the hubby) decision to start eating cleaner. Zeal purports that they are an 'all "natural" nutritional drink using a synergistic blend of whole food concentrate.' So I decided to look up some of their ingredients. They use crystalline fructose which is a processed sweetener derived from corn that is

almost entirely fructose. So much for being all natural! You are to use their replacement shake 2 times daily to lose weight. This is really not much different than slim fast. They also fortify the powders with a few essential vitamins that don't occur in the raw ingredients. Hmmmm....so maybe you just eat those raw ingredients instead of having them artificially inserted into your all natural drink! They also use acesulfame potassium in their drink, this is a calorie free sweetener. They post a precautionary statement on their label; not for pregnant women, not for nursing mothers, and not for children under 12. But if they are an all natural supplement wouldn't you want pregnant women, nursing mothers and kids 12 and under to get all the great nutrition they can??!! They also state Zeal Wellness is formulated with whole food nutrition. They offer a cleanse to restore and detoxify, a Zeal Burn that uses the 'power of thermogenic fat burners, carb blockers, and an appetite suppressant that doesn't make you jittery,' all of this to speed up weight loss. And of course at the end, the lovely little diddy: "these statements have not been evaluated by the United States Food and Drug Administration." So all in all, this is no better for you than the list of the other reported weight loss gimmicks on the market. Like the rest of the weight loss fads, once you go back to eating instead of having shakes, the weight returns. If you don't learn to make better food choices in order to lose weight, then all you've done is a quick fix, and we all know, they don't last!

The Zone Diet - Emilee Prenevost

I did my research topic on The Zone Diet. I will be using excerpts from an article I read bc they word it better than I could smile emoticon

Basically you eat protein at each meal and reduce carbs...the sales pitch idea is "those who follow it will reset their metabolism, warding off heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions."

"The Zone diet restricts calories while encouraging you to change the balance of foods you eat in order to lose weight. On the Zone diet, you will get 30 percent of your calories from protein, 30 percent from fat, and 40 percent from carbohydrates. The carbohydrates favored by the Zone diet include beans, most fruits, whole grains, and vegetables. In contrast, many diets heavily emphasize carbohydrates and cut back on fat."

It all sounds good in theory, and has several pros going for it, like:

- variety
- ease of use
- frequent meals
- healthy fats
- sugar control
- achievable weight loss

But it also has several cons:

- Calcium intake (bc it limits dairy, but there are many other foods that contain calcium, you just have to make sure you are getting enough)
- missing nutrients (bc of the food restrictions, it can result in a lack of vitamin c, folic acid, fiber, and several other nutrients)
- inflexible dietary balance (this diet follows a strict 30-30-40 rule... 30% protein, 30% fat, and 40% carbohydrates... but not everyone loses weight the same so that ratio may not work for some people)
- kidney risk ("a high protein diet can put stress on the kidneys, which may be risky for some people")

-expense

-moderate to high fat (the AHA warns that the diet may be too high in fat for those who need to monitor their blood pressure and cholesterol levels)

-caloric restriction (less than 1200 calories per day which may (will!) result in hunger and difficulty sticking to the diet)

-long term commitment challenge ("It may be difficult to follow for a lifetime, as it restricts many common foods such as rice and pasta.")

A sample meal while on The Zone Diet looks like this:

-4.5ozs lean hamburger meat

-1 slice low fat cheese

-1 slice each of tomato, lettuce, and onion

-1 piece whole grain bread

-small fruit serving

It sounds like a short term doable "diet" but unless you are extremely committed, you will be likely to "fall of the wagon" and binge eat all the forbidden foods. It is definitely not a lifestyle like FIT is!

<http://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-nutrition/the-zone-diet.aspx>