A DOCTOR'S GUIDE TO DIET PLANS FROM A–Z

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Myriad diet plans exist and your patient might be on one of them. But if health complaints or questions regarding a diet plan arise from your patient, would you—their physician—know enough about that plan to intelligently discuss it? This article provides an overview and summary of some of the most popular diet plans on the market.

MAJOR DIET CLASSIFICATIONS

Omnivorous diets are the most common in the world. Consisting of both animal and vegetable foods, they are the easiest to nutritionally balance in terms of protein, vitamins, and other nutrients.

Carnivorous diets consist of only animal flesh, which has highly concentrated forms of complete protein, fats of various types and amounts, almost zero fiber, and some—but not all—vitamins and minerals. The protein in flesh is useful for growth functions and tissue repair, but needs to be augmented by other sources of fiber, B-complex vitamins, vitamins C and E, and minerals. Many, if not most, people are carnivorous, but only as part of an omnivorous diet.

Vegetarian diets mean different things to different people. Some people will eat chicken and/or fish and still call themselves a vegetarian of one sort or another. The *lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet* is the most common vegetarian diet, consisting of cow by-products, such as milk and cheese (the *lacto-* portion), chicken eggs (the *ovo-* portion), and plant products (the *vegetarian* portion). Some lacto-ovo vegetarians, however, avoid either milk products or eggs.

A **lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet** supplies a balanced supply of calcium, iron, vitamin B-12, and adequate complete protein if enough calories are ingested to avoid using the protein as fuel for the body. Throughout the ages (and until quite recently) most people have been primarily vegetarians because their access to meat was

infrequent. Some advocates argue the human body is more adapted to vegetarianism because of its long and convoluted intestinal system. They say carnivores have shorter intestinal systems so meat can transit sooner before it has a chance to “putrify.” Others argue that we have the enzymes to digest and that if we weren’t designed to eat meat, we wouldn’t be able to.

In general, vegetarians enjoy lower incidences of hypertension, obesity, hypercholesterolemia, cardiovascular diseases, osteoporosis, and some types of cancer as shown by studies of vegetarian populations. But potential problems for vegetarians include insufficient iron and vitamin B-12, which can lead to pernicious anemia, if those nutrients are not supplemented.

The **vegan diet** is the purest form of vegetarianism. No animal products of any sort are eaten, ie, no eggs, milk, butter, cheese, or other milk products. Vegans consume only vegetables, fruits, grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds. Some vegans even avoid honey because they feel bees work as slaves to feed their masters (people), and honey might contain bee fragments.

Vegan dieters may weigh less than average and they may have an even lower incidence of hypercholesterolemia, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, and some cancers. However, with a vegan diet there is a greater potential for nutritional deficiencies, particularly of vitamin B-12. Iron and calcium intake may be low, and zinc levels may also be low unless enough seeds and nuts are regularly consumed. Vitamin D is often low, but exposure to sunshine will help. And vitamin A levels may be low unless enough dark green, orange, and yellow vegetables are consumed. Fiber intake is usually good.

Protein levels can be lacking unless the vegan dieter is very conscientious in combining foods with complementary amino acids to obtain complete proteins. For this reason, a vegan diet can be dangerous for children unless there is strict oversight to ensure the proper amount and balance of nutrients. Pregnant women or nursing mothers are also particularly at risk of nutritional deficiencies unless they carefully monitor themselves.

Nutritional supplements and periodic biochemical profiles, especially for vitamin B-12 deficiencies, are often recommended for vegan dieters. A vegan diet can be very healthy if practiced correctly, but if there is recurring illness in a vegan practitioner, a nutritional analysis should be undertaken to determine any nutritional deficiencies.

The **macrobiotic diet** originated in Japan where it's considered part of a whole philosophy of life, which strives for a balance of *yin* and *yang*. Approaching the philosophy of a vegan diet, a macrobiotic diet primarily consists of cooked foods. Raw foods are considered too difficult to digest, and eggs and dairy foods are avoided. Meat is also avoided; only minimal amounts of whitefish are eaten. Minimal amounts of fruit are eaten and even those fruits are usually cooked.

Whole cereal grains form about half of a macrobiotic diet. Refined flour-based products are avoided, and pastas and breads are eaten only occasionally. Vegetables make up about a quarter of the diet, but all members of the nightshade family (tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, and eggplant) are avoided. Certain other vegetables, such as avocados, spinach, and sweet potatoes, are also avoided. Beans, seaweeds, soybean products, and some seeds and nuts may be eaten, as well as soups and salads.

The macrobiotic diet is considered a balanced diet and provides an adequate amount of protein, a low amount of fat and sufficient vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates, and fiber. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a macrobiotic diet might be useful in treating many diseases, including cancer.

The **raw food diet**, consisting of uncooked whole foods, is similar to the vegan diet (and has similar nutritional concerns). Unlike the vegan diet, though, milk products may be eaten if made from raw (unpasteurized) milk. Vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts and seeds are consumed, but any stimulants, chemicals, and alcohol are avoided.

Usually low in protein, calcium and iron, the raw food diet should not be followed for very long unless it is very carefully balanced in essential nutrients. Some people following this diet may experience problems with gas until acclimated.

The **fruitarian diet** is self-explanatory. Consisting entirely of fruits, it is dangerous to follow for a long-term diet (longer than a week or two) because fruits are very low in protein, some B-vitamins, iron, calcium, magne-

sium, fats, and essential fatty acids (unless the seeds are eaten).

Fasting is technically consuming only water. Because it provides no nutrients or calories whatsoever, fasting is not actually a diet and should be done for only short periods of time. A variant, *Juice Fasting*, is more common. Providing more nutrients than absolute fasting, it can be tolerated for longer periods of time, but juice fasting is still lacking in total nutrition. Many people undergo either fasting or juice fasting to "cleanse" their body.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR COMMERCIAL WEIGHT-LOSS DIETS

Countless weight-loss diets come and go every year. Consumers are bombarded with ads and books touting regimens that reduce calories, change eating habits or promote certain foods. Many are fads, some are dangerous, but some are healthful and actually work. It would be nearly impossible to list all the existing diet plans, but the following overview summarizes some of the more popular ones:

Atkins Diet

The Atkins Diet claims dieters can change their metabolism and easily lose weight by eating foods high in protein and fat, while limiting intake of foods high in carbohydrates. The late Dr. Robert Atkins, creator of the diet, maintained that consuming large amounts of carbohydrates causes overproduction of insulin, which leads to increased hunger and weight gain.

Atkins dieters are limited to 15 to 60 grams of carbohydrates per day, but can eat virtually as much protein and fat (except trans- and hydrogenated fats) as they want for an indefinite period. Recent spikes in American meat and egg prices are attributable to the estimated 20–30 million Atkins followers avoiding carbohydrates and consuming only protein.

The Atkins Diet is relatively easy to follow and many people like it because protein and fat are usually restricted in other diets. Atkins dieters may experience decreased hunger and rapid weight loss. Alcohol and caffeine are not allowed. Constipation may arise from lack of fiber.

Diets that limit carbohydrates force the body to burn fat or muscle as fuel. During the process of breaking down fat for energy, byproducts called *ketones* are formed. They suppress appetite, but may cause fatigue, nausea,

fluid loss, and breath odor similar to acetone. Diabetics or people with heart or kidney problems should avoid diets that promote the formation of ketones.

Cholesterol profiles frequently improve on low carb, high fat and protein diets, but the jury's still out on any long-term effects. Evidence indicates that dioxins can build up in animal fatty tissues. As a result, The National Academy of Science and the Institute of Medicine suggest that girls and women of reproductive age limit their intake of animal fats and whole milk to protect their offspring from the effects of dioxins, which are known to cause birth defects, behavioral disorders, and cancer.

Beverly Hills Diet

The Beverly Hills Diet is a complicated 35-day structured menu plan that lists specific items to eat at each meal without counting calories or grams of fat. Only fruit is eaten during the first 10 days; on the 11th day carbohydrates and butter are added; and on the 19th day protein is added. Fatty snacks are permitted. Caffeine is not allowed; wine is allowed sometimes; champagne intake is unlimited (after all, it is *Beverly Hills*).

Beverly Hills dieters may experience rapid initial weight loss, but must follow the plan exactly. Diarrhea may occur. The unappetizing diet, which is not based on any scientific documentation, is very low in protein and several vitamins and minerals.

Blood Type Diet

The Blood Type Diet claims that each of the 4 blood types has a unique antigen marker that reacts negatively to certain foods. Varying levels of stomach acids and digestive enzymes are somehow correlated with the blood types.

Dieters must purchase *Eat Right 4 Your Type* or *Live Right 4 Your Type*, books that promote specific guidelines for foods to avoid for different blood types, amounts to eat, and the time to eat. Weight loss results from restricting food intake for an indefinite period. Nutritional deficiencies can result from eliminating certain groups of food.

The dieter's blood type must be known, and the diet can be unrealistic for families with different blood types. The dieter must also purchase a book to follow the plan. Alcohol is permitted with some blood types.

Cabbage Soup Diet

Designed for short-term weight loss, the Cabbage Soup Diet involves eating as much cabbage soup as the dieter

desires for 1 week. Recipes vary, but typically include lots of cabbage, onions, green peppers, tomatoes, celery, carrots, green beans, bouillon, onion soup mix, and V-8 or tomato juice. In addition, specific foods such as potatoes, fruit juice, vegetables, and meat are eaten on certain days of the program. Alcohol is forbidden, but drinking coffee or tea with the soup is encouraged.

Weight loss is rapid and may be as much as 10–15 pounds in one week. The diet is low in protein, complex carbohydrates, and some vitamins and minerals and should not be followed for an extended duration. Some dieters may experience light-headedness, weakness and difficulty in concentrating.

DietSmart.com Diet

The DietSmart.com Diet is an on-line program that offers a personalized method to lose weight in a healthy way. The diet is tailored to meet individual needs and members are offered support. Dieters complete a lifestyle questionnaire to determine which of 6 different plans is right for them. There is both a registration fee and a monthly membership fee.

Weight loss is gradual, about one to two pounds per week. Some plans are for less than 6 months, but maintenance plans are included for long-term use. The diet follows standard nutrition and exercise protocol. Alcohol is limited to a couple of drinks per week and caffeine to 2 cups of coffee or tea per day. Company health experts are available by phone and on the internet.

DietWatch.com Diet

The DietWatch.com Diet promotes a slow weight-loss program designed to encourage long-term, healthful changes in eating habits. The program includes 4 types of calorie-controlled daily menus (low carbohydrate, low cholesterol, vegetarian and non-restrictive), shopping lists, nutrition calculator, exercise regimens, weekly reports, and live on-line chats for any questions. Menu substitutions are easy and may be changed whenever desired. Alcohol and caffeine may be used in moderation.

eDiets.com Diet

The eDiets.com Diet is another cyberspace program that's designed for healthful changes in eating habits and long-term weight maintenance. Dieters lose an average of 2 pounds per week. Participants receive a meal plan, shopping lists, daily guidance and tips, and the opportunity to chat on-line with health professionals. Alcohol and caffeine may be used.

Exchange Plan Diet

In the Exchange Plan Diet, foods are separated into different categories, such as protein and carbohydrates. Foods within each category may be exchanged with each other, but portions are regulated to control calories and fat count. A typical breakfast may be 2 grains, 1 milk, 1 protein. Numerous food choices allow a varied diet that can be easily followed for long-term weight maintenance. Weight loss is slow and gradual. Alcohol and caffeine may be used. Dieters are required to eat foods from every food group.

Fit for Life Diet

The Fit for Life Diet severely limits dairy and meat products for an indefinite period. 70 percent of the diet is based upon eating fruits and vegetables. Calories or grams of fat are not counted and the dieter may eat as much of the specifically recommended foods as desired. Supposedly, the rapid weight loss comes from improved digestion, but actually comes from the elimination of many high-calorie foods. No caffeine is allowed and wine is allowed only on an empty stomach! Limited food choices supply insufficient protein, vitamins D and B12, and zinc.

Food Combining Diet

The Food Combining Diet is based upon the controversial idea that weight loss occurs when foods are eaten in the proper combinations. Dairy products are prohibited and animal protein consumption is minimal. 30 percent of the diet is based on 1 or 2 servings of starch, and 70 percent on fruits and vegetables. Alcohol and caffeine are prohibited.

Weight loss may occur rapidly because of lower caloric intake, but the diet is unbalanced and deficient in protein, vitamins D and B12, calcium, and zinc.

Grapefruit Diet

Many variations of the Grapefruit Diet exist, but all require eating half a grapefruit before every meal to utilize their "fat-burning enzymes." Calories are generally limited to less than 800 per day, but some allow eating until the dieter feels "stuffed." Alcohol is prohibited, but copious use of caffeine is strongly encouraged.

Grapefruit has no fat, is low in calories and sodium, and contains high amounts of vitamin C (pink grapefruit also contains beta-carotene). Unfortunately, no evidence exists for fat-burning enzymes in grapefruit. Dieters experience rapid weight loss, though, primarily

from water loss. The diet, which is low in calories, protein, fiber, and several vitamins and minerals, should be followed for only 1 to 3 weeks. And dieters should be made aware that grapefruit may interfere with certain medications.

Herbalife Diet

The Herbalife Diet includes multivitamins, herbal tablets, and protein shakes that substitute for 2 meals per day. The recommended well-balanced third meal gives a total of at least 1,000 calories per day. Alcohol is not recommended and caffeine should be used in moderation. Some dieters consider the regimen to be expensive because Herbalife products must be purchased for as long as they stay on the plan.

High Protein Diet

Variations of the High Protein Diet all recommend 30–40 percent of calories from protein. High-carbohydrate foods are severely limited. Feelings of satiety are enhanced from eating more protein, which leads to less hunger between meals. Lower carbohydrate vegetables are encouraged. Consumption of alcohol and caffeine varies by the diet plan. Some high protein diets limit intake of carbohydrates, vitamins, and fiber to levels that are unhealthy. The Atkins Diet is one of several variants of the High Protein Diet.

Jenny Craig Diet

The Jenny Craig diet plan provides balanced and nutritious frozen meals to its clients. The menu is individualized and flexible, but some people find the food exchange system complex and confusing. Some dieters also consider the plan to be expensive. Alcohol is prohibited and caffeine is used in moderation. Personal weekly consultations give support and promote lifestyle changes for clients, but the counselors are not necessarily highly trained health professionals.

Juice Fast Diet

Variants of the Juice Fast Diet, which consist of only vegetable or fruit juice, last from 1 to 5 days. All juices should contain no salt, sugar, or additives. Weight is quickly lost because of the low caloric intake and lack of protein, complex carbohydrates, and fat. Metabolism slows due to the low calorie count, which works against the goal of losing weight. Alcohol and caffeine are banned. Some fasters may feel weak and disoriented.

Kashi GoLean Natural Slimming System Diet

With the Kashi GoLean Natural Slimming System, dieters choose among low fat, high fiber Kashi GoLean cereal, bars, or shakes for breakfast, lunch, and snacks for a total of 700 calories that includes daily protein and fiber needs. For dinner, dieters eat a well-balanced meal.

Kashi products use soy protein and whole grains, so are healthful. High in fiber, water intake should be increased and the products should be gradually introduced to minimize gastrointestinal disturbances and gas. Alcohol and caffeine are permitted. For some dieters, the plan can get monotonous.

Low Fat Diet

In the variations of Low Fat Diets meats, cheeses, and fried foods are replaced with lower-fat versions or are limited in portion sizes. Added fats, such as butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, etc. are eliminated or severely limited. Eating fruits and vegetables and other low-fat foods is encouraged. Use of alcohol and caffeine depends on the plan. Low fat dieters should be label readers because many low-fat foods contain large amounts of sugar (and many calories), inconsistent with any weight loss plan.

Mayo Clinic Diet

Variations of the Mayo Clinic Diet have been in existence for several decades, but have never been endorsed by the Mayo Clinic. In fact, the Minnesota-based Mayo Clinic flatly states the diet is bogus. Weight loss is rapid even though dieters eat as much meat as wanted. They're encouraged to eat fried foods. And they can eat until they're "stuffed."

Eating grapefruit at each meal supposedly burns fat, and it's claimed that eating more fat will encourage weight loss. Alcohol is prohibited, but moderate use of caffeine is okay.

Because the diet contains no complex carbohydrates, it may lead to weakness and lack of concentration. The diet doesn't work for long-term weight management (normal diet duration is about 75 days), and eating grapefruit has no actual effect on burning fat (see the Grapefruit Diet).

Nutrisystem Diet

The Nutrisystem Diet is a healthful low-fat plan with a well-balanced diet that includes all types of foods. Each

dieter loses up to 2 pounds per week, receives an individualized calorie count, a weekly newsletter, access to a chat room, and a weekly personal email chat with a counselor. An exercise regimen is also emphasized.

Prepackaged Nutrisystem meals are eaten for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. They are supplemented by fruits, vegetables, and milk. Caffeine is allowed. The plan may be followed indefinitely but is relatively expensive if Nutrisystem food is eaten forever.

Optifast Diet

The Optifast Diet is a medically monitored formula-based weight loss program (see Shake Diet below) that uses nutritional shakes, bars, and soups to replace meals. The program is designed for people who are 50 or more pounds overweight, or have a body mass index (BMI) greater than 30. Registered dietitians, counselors, and physicians trained in obesity management perform initial medical and lifestyle evaluations and continually monitor dieters to ensure peak health during their gradual weight loss. The average documented weight loss of 20,000 individuals who have used the plan is 52 pounds. Lifestyle, nutrition, and activity counseling aid the dieter in maintaining their weight for the long term.

The Perricone Prescription Diet

The 28-day Perricone Prescription Diet was developed by dermatologist Nicholas Perricone, M.D., who believes high-glycemic foods, such as sugar, bread, bananas, pasta, and potatoes, should be avoided because they age skin and cause wrinkles through the process of inflammation. By eating sufficient protein and food containing antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, such as salmon, dark green leafy vegetables, avocados, and berries, skin will look younger and healthier and overall health will improve.

Regular exercise and topical creams and supplements are advocated. Alcohol is prohibited and green tea is recommended in lieu of coffee. The 28-day program can be repeated indefinitely. Foods recommended are healthful, but the frequent use of salmon can be expensive. And there's some recent evidence that farm-raised salmon may have higher levels of PCBs than wild salmon.

Pritikin Diet

Weight loss from the Pritikin Diet is really a beneficial side effect. The diet was originally developed to treat cardiovascular disease. Eggs, animal proteins, processed foods and most fats are eliminated in favor of fruits,

vegetables, and whole grains. A limited amount of fat high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as that found in salmon and other seafood, may be eaten. Portion sizes are not controlled and there is no calorie counting. Alcohol and caffeine are prohibited.

Some dieters may find it difficult to give up eggs, meat, and dairy products. Low-fat diets, in general, can be unsatisfying and lead to excessive caloric intake. This diet may be low in some vitamins and minerals.

Revival Soy Diet

The Revival Soy Diet plan is a type of replacement diet in which Revival Soy bars or shakes replace 1 or 2 meals per day. Eating more fruits, vegetables, and water is encouraged, as is regular exercise several times a week. Fat intake is lowered. The essential difference from other similar diets is in the use of soy.

Soy does have some healthful qualities that help decrease body fat, but there's a possibility of ingesting too much soy if more than 2 products per day are used. Soy isoflavones act as estrogen analogues in the body and may interact with estrogen-sensitive tumors or interfere with some chemotherapeutic drugs. Overall, the Revival plan is healthful, but their products must be ordered from the company.

Richard Simmons Diet

The Richard Simmons Diet is a sensible weight-loss plan that includes moderate portions of healthful foods, exercise, and positive motivation with videotapes—if the dieter can stand Simmons' style of presentation. The plan has daily tips, on-line chats, and a diet based on the American Diabetes Association exchange system, which calculates caloric need on gender, starting and goal weight.

The plan includes all food groups, but the dieter must track types of foods and portions. Alcohol and caffeine are discouraged. Designed for 1 to 2 pounds of weight loss per week, the diet can be followed indefinitely.

Scarsdale Diet

Another low-carbohydrate, high protein diet, the Scarsdale Diet is a strict plan that must be followed exactly. For 7 to 14 days the dieter eats 3 meals per day consisting of fruits and vegetables and unlimited amounts of lean protein. Snacks and alcohol are forbidden. Caffeine use is limited. Calories or grams of fat are not counted and there is no portion control.

Weight loss may occur rapidly and there's no feeling of hunger, but the plan is low in carbohydrates, fiber, and some vitamins and minerals. Herbal appetite suppressants are encouraged, which may be dangerous for people with cardiovascular problems.

Shake Diet

Shake Diets consist of two major types: over-the-counter types, such as Slim-Fast (see below), Nestlé, Kashi GoLean, *et al.*, and medically supervised types, such as Optifast. OTC plans replace 2 meals and a snack with their product. Then a third low-calorie, low-fat, and balanced meal is eaten. The medically supervised plans generally have less than 1,000 calories per day and require the dieter to use their food exclusively for the duration of the plan.

Alcohol and caffeine are prohibited. Shakes are low fat and fortified with vitamins and minerals. The main drawback is the monotony of liquid meals.

Slim-Fast Diet

The flexible Slim-Fast plan is designed for the dieter to lose 1 to 2 pounds per week for an indefinite period. 2 Slim-Fast shakes replace 2 meals (usually breakfast and lunch), 3 Slim-Fast snack bars are consumed, and then a balanced meal (usually dinner) is eaten for a total of 1,200 to 1,500 calories. Slim-Fast promotes daily exercise and lifestyle changes for long-term weight management. The fortified shakes contain up to 220 calories and come in a variety of flavors. Alcohol and caffeine are permitted. Slim-Fast also has a website for online support.

Somersizing Diet

Suzanne Somers' diet is a food-combining plan called *Somersizing*. The plan eliminates sugar and white flour. Fruit is eaten alone on an empty stomach. Proteins and fats are eaten with vegetables, but without carbohydrates. And vegetables and carbohydrates are eaten together without fat.

Portions, calories, or fat grams are not counted. Frequent, small meals are encouraged. Alcohol is discouraged and caffeine is prohibited. Weight loss is due to decreased total calorie intake. The food combining benefits are not based on scientific evidence, and some dieters may find the food-combining regimen too cumbersome.

South Beach Diet

The South Beach Diet is a three-phase low-carbohydrate plan in which dieters eat normal-sized portions of lean animal protein, generous amounts of healthful monounsaturated fats, unlimited amounts of vegetables with a low glycemic index, and small amounts of carbohydrates found in fruits and whole grains.

The restrictive 2 week Phase I consists of lean proteins, low- or fat-free cheese, eggs, legumes, nuts, healthful fats, and low-glycemic vegetables. Phase II, which dieters follow until they reach their target weight, adds fruits, rice, pasta, whole grain bread, and fat-free milk and yogurt. Phase III is followed indefinitely as a weight maintenance regimen, but dieters are free to move among all 3 phases, as needed.

Cholesterol levels should improve if dieters adhere to the plan. Caffeine may be used in moderate amounts, red wine is encouraged for its cardiovascular benefits, but beer, with its high glycemic index, should be avoided. Using glycemic indices for weight control is controversial, however, and is not endorsed by the American Diabetes Association or the American Dietetic Association. Dieters who stay in Phase I too long may experience deficiencies of several nutrients, including calcium and fiber.

Special K Diet

The Special K Diet is a variant on the meal replacement plan. For 2 weeks, dieters eat 1 cup of Kellogg's Special K, Special K Red Berries, or Smart Start with $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of non-fat milk and fruit for breakfast and again for either lunch or dinner. Fruit and vegetable snacks are permitted.

Studies have shown that calcium may help dieters lose weight. The Special K Diet helps increase calcium intake, but the cereal isn't whole grain and doesn't have much fiber. Diet monotony may also be a problem. Alcohol and caffeine are permitted. Weight loss primarily results from cutting fat intake and calories.

Subway Diet

Everyone's heard of Jared, the man who ate nothing but a low-fat Subway submarine sandwich, a small bag of potato chips, and a diet drink every day for a year and lost 245 pounds. But Jared also skipped breakfasts and limited his caloric intake to only 1,000 calories per day.

The Subway chain has several subs that have 6 grams of fat or less. Eating Subway subs can be a healthful choice if they are eaten in addition to a balanced meal once a day, otherwise vitamin D, calcium, and zinc deficiencies may eventually occur. Sodium levels may be high if salt, pickles, or olives are added. Alcohol should be limited, but caffeine is allowed. Dieters may remain on the plan indefinitely.

Interestingly, the Subway chain doesn't endorse Jared's weight loss method, but their website provides healthful weight loss tips, such as eating breakfast, eating lots of vegetables, eating slowly, drinking no-calorie beverages, and exercising regularly.

Sugar Busters Diet

According to the Sugar Buster plan, eating the refined sugar found in baked goods, candy, and soft drinks as well as potatoes, corn, carrots, white flour, and pasta produces increased amounts of insulin, which promotes more body fat and greater weight.

Many people do eat too much sugar (with its empty calories), but there is no evidence that eating whole foods with natural sugars will automatically trigger weight gain. Alcohol is permitted on a full stomach (dry red wine is preferred) and moderate caffeine use is permitted. Dieters may remain on this plan indefinitely.

Thin for Life Diet

Joyce Meyer, a minister and author of the book, *Eating Thin for Life!*, believes that God never meant food to be a primary focus, whether trying to lose weight or maintain weight loss. She surveyed 160 dieters who had lost at least 20 pounds and kept the weight off for at least 3 years. Correlating their personal histories and weight loss advice, the author boiled everything down to 10 rules of weight management for dieters to follow. Dieters learn how to develop a positive attitude and manage their weight. Alcohol and caffeine are allowed, weight loss is gradual, and dieters may stay on the plan indefinitely, while adjusting the plan as needed.

Ultimate Weight Solution Diet

Dr. Phil McGraw, self-improvement guru, host of a television show, and author of *The Ultimate Weight Solution*, offers "7 Keys" to weight loss. Dieters come to grips about what they think about themselves and their weight, and learn to replace toxic messages with positive thoughts. Then, they learn how to control emotional eating, how to change their environment, how to master impulse eating, how to choose foods, how to get

in the habit of exercising, and how to organize a support group. Carbohydrates or fats aren't tracked and calories aren't counted. Dieters learn control and how to change their lifestyle for permanent weight loss.

Weight Watchers Diet

In the Weight Watchers Winning Points plan, every food is given a certain number of points depending on its calorie, fat, and fiber content. No foods are forbidden. Dieters are assigned a daily number of points to use when choosing the foods to eat. Alcohol and caffeine are permitted. Meal plans are balanced and healthful, and dieters may stay on the regimen indefinitely. Weight Watchers offers group support, and chapters of the organization are found everywhere.

Zone Diet

The Zone Diet is a complex plan based upon gender, activity level, and percentage of body fat. For every meal, dieters eat 40 percent of their calories from carbo-

hydrates, 30 percent from protein, and 30 percent from fat. Theoretically, this makes the body work within its peak performance "zone" for maximum weight loss and energy. Specific meal plans help dieters find their personal "zone."

Dieters lose weight from the low calorie count, but they can enjoy high-protein foods such as steak and other meats. However, the low level of carbohydrates may lower energy levels. The diet is also low in some vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Moderate use of alcohol is permitted, but caffeine is prohibited. Dieters may stay on the plan indefinitely, but they may find the 40/30/30 ratio cumbersome to follow and difficult to calculate.

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