

NUTRITION



FACT SHEET

Popular Diets Reviewed 2007

By the time you read this, there may already be a new best-selling diet book heading the list. But, with some help from ADA media spokespeople, we have put together these facts to give you the scoop on current popular diets.

***The Sonoma Diet** by Connie Guttersen, RD, PhD, Meredith Books, 2005.*

The Sonoma Diet, named for California's beautiful wine country, is influenced by a Mediterranean plant-based diet. It places emphasis on a variety of flavorful, nutrient-dense "power foods" including almonds, bell peppers, blueberries, broccoli, grapes, olive oil, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes and whole grains.

The first phase or "wave" of the diet is by far the most restrictive. Although it encourages plenty of healthful foods, fruit is entirely restricted and dairy foods are limited. There's no scientific support for the idea that people need to forego, for any length of time, nutrient-dense foods such as fruit and potatoes, which provide fiber that fills you up and can aid in weight management. Wave 2 allows more calories as well as more food and beverage choices to promote gradual weight loss. Wave 3, the maintenance phase, allows for occasional "indulgences."

The Sonoma Diet emphasizes wholesome, flavorful foods, including those espoused by the Mediterranean-style of eating. It also encourages enjoyment of meals, but in controlled portions. Following a similar eating pattern may help some successfully lose weight and body fat, especially if

they balance their food intake with regular moderate enjoyable exercise.
—Reviewed by Elisa Zied, MS, RD, CD

***The Cheater's Diet** by Paul Rivas, MD, Health Communications, 2005.*

Dr. Rivas states the two main reasons people are unsuccessful at weight loss involve boredom and excessive restriction. During the week, readers are advised to eat three meals and two small snacks daily. The composition and quantity of each meal is based on the plate method: one half of the plate as vegetables or fruits (or one quarter as produce and the rest empty); one quarter as lean protein; one quarter as whole grains.

Dr. Rivas claims you must cheat on weekends in order to "stoke your metabolism" and boost fat loss. From 9 a.m. on Saturday to 9 p.m. on Sunday, you are allowed to eat whatever you want. The basic formula for weight loss in this book is the week day/weekend diet combo and physical activity. Readers are encouraged to exercise as much as possible.

The overall approach to nutrition is healthful, emphasizing fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, and enjoying pleasurable foods. Also stressed is the importance of physical activity

and addressing emotional eating. However, there is no cited research to support the theory that weekend cheating is the key to a boost in metabolic rate or success in either short-term or long-term weight management. And this theory is not supported by a study conducted with participants in the National Weight Control Registry which found these successful "losers" do not cheat on the weekends, but rather indulge in "treats" in moderation consistently.

In my opinion, the book's cons outweigh the pros. The basic approach is not research-focused, both the diet and exercise plans are "one size fits all," the dietary supplement recommendations defy up-to-date science-based references, and there are no guidelines for individualizing the plan.

—Reviewed by Cynthia Sass, MPH, MA, RD, LDN

***The Flavor Point Diet** by David L. Katz, MD, MPH, with Catherine Katz, PhD, Rodale Books, 2005.*

The Flavor Point Diet works to subdue appetite on two levels. First, it uses flavor themes to organize eating. When a flavor is tasted repeatedly throughout the day, the brain's appetite center is

This fact sheet was prepared for the general public. Questions regarding its content and use should be directed to a registered dietitian.

Popular Diets Reviewed 2007 (continued)

more quickly satisfied so the body senses satiety more quickly; and we eat fewer calories. Second, the book shows readers a new way of eating by learning to choose and cook meals using minimally processed foods that do not contain an overabundance of flavors.

The authors guide readers to the Flavor Point way of eating by using three phases. The first phase shows readers how to “drape a delicate flavor theme over their meals” each day. For example, there is Spinach Day with a spinach and feta omelet for breakfast and pasta fagioli with spinach marinara sauce for dinner. Phase 2 of the meal plan includes a greater variety of daily flavors, whereby only meals—not entire days—are flavor themed. Phase 3 expands on the first two phases.

As should be expected from a physician with Dr. Katz’s credentials, the diet plan is nutritionally sound. The flavor themes throughout the book build on an abundance of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, fish and poultry, and encourage limiting fat and opting for healthier snacks. Readers should avoid taking the concept too far and becoming too restrictive in food variety.

The Flavor Point Diet concept is a fresh and remarkably simple twist on the low-fat diet. It brings to light sensory-specific satiety and how flavor variety stimulates the appetite center in the brain, while flavor repetition soothes it. The challenge

for most people will be the time required to plan flavor-specific meals and snacks.

—Reviewed by Jeannie Moloo, PhD, RD

The Supermarket Diet by Janis Jibrin, MS, RD, Hearst, 2005.

The Supermarket Diet starts with a two-week meal plan which includes shopping lists, recipes and snacks. The author helps readers select which calorie level is the best fit, how to troubleshoot problems if the calorie level selected does not seem to be yielding good results, and how to progress through the diet.

The Supermarket Diet’s strong suit is its detail. It is well-organized, well-written and incredibly practical. There are shopping lists for stocking the kitchen (from literally no food in the cupboards to a full-fledged diet-smart pantry). There are easy-to-understand and execute meal plans and recipes, and all sorts of nuggets of nutrition information.

The Supermarket Diet handily covers the food and nutrition component of dieting. It offers a useful chapter on exercise, but readers may need to look elsewhere for more detail on how to build strength, flexibility and endurance. They may also need to connect with a registered dietitian to address the emotional and psychological influences on their weight concerns.

—Reviewed by Susan Moores, MS, RD

The Longevity Diet by Brian M. Delaney and Lisa Walford, Marlowe & Company, 2005.

This book uses data from studies on laboratory mice to draw the conclusion that a reduced-calorie diet is the only proven way to slow the aging process and maintain peak vitality. There is basically no diet plan or meal plan to follow. The authors recommend healthy fats, olive and canola oil, 40 to 60 grams of fiber per day, and seven to nine servings of fruits and vegetables. Whole grains and calcium are recommended, yet no specific amounts are stated. Other names for this diet are The High-Low Diet, The Walford Diet, Calorie Restriction or the CR Diet, and CRL (calorie restriction for longevity).

The Longevity Diet emphasizes healthy nutrient-rich foods such as fruits and vegetables and the reduction of empty calories. However, there is no evidence the aging process slows down during calorie restriction. Watching calories can be good for healthful living, but there is a fine line between restrictive diets and eating disorders. In addition to understanding calories, it’s important to understand essential nutrient requirements and how to maintain the balance of calories-in/calories-out to attain and sustain ideal body weight.

—Reviewed by Malena Perdomo, RD, CDE

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