

Top 10 Reasons Not to Diet

by Francie M. Berg

- 1. Diets don't work – dieters don't lose weight in a lasting way.**
Dieting causes short-term weight loss, continuing no more than six months, followed by weight regain. Often more weight is gained than was lost. (Studies show dieters are more likely to become overweight than people who eat normally.)
- 2. Dieting can cause lasting injury and even death.**
Sudden death from electrolyte imbalance or heart arrhythmia is a real risk. Each year dieting is related to severe health damage and deaths in the United States.
- 3. Dieting disrupts normal body processes.**
Rapid weight loss puts the body in a stressful, defensive state. The body tries to defend itself against weight loss, decreasing metabolism, heart rate, temperature, and sexual function, as well as intellectual, emotional, and social activity.
- 4. Dieting causes weight cycling (repeated weight loss and regain).**
Research shows weight cycling is associated with higher death rates.
- 5. Dieters often feel tired, lightheaded, and have difficulty concentrating.**
They may lack essential nutrients, including high quality iron, zinc, protein, and calories.
- 6. Dieting leads to binge eating, overeating, and chaotic eating patterns.**
Dieting disrupts normal eating. By definition, dieters override internal signals of hunger and satiety, so they may no longer know when they are hungry or when they are full.
- 7. Dieting leads to disordered eating, and is the primary precursor for eating disorders.**
Many experts believe the high rate of eating disorders in the U.S. is due in part to high numbers of people restricting food and becoming chronic dieters.
- 8. Dieting causes food preoccupation.**
People who diet spend more time thinking about food and eating. This “drive to eat” when food is limited is believed to be a survival trait against starvation.
- 9. Dieting diminishes women, and increasingly men and children.**
Dieting focuses attention on appearance, rather than character, talent, or personal fulfillment. And unfortunately, dieting mothers become role models for dieting children.
- 10. Dieters put their lives on hold, “waiting to be thin.”**
Instead of playing the anticipation game, accept and respect yourself and others. Live the life you want now. Develop a healthy lifestyle, and let weight come off as a result, or not. Live actively, eat well, and feel good about yourself. You deserve the best – right now.

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