

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 people who diet are more likely to become overweight than those who eat normally.)

2. Dieting can cause lasting injury and death.

Sudden death from heart arrhythmia or electrolyte imbalance 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 into a stressful, defensive state. The body tries to protect itself against weight loss by lowering metabolism, heart rate, temperature and sexual function. In addition, there is a drop in intellectual, emotional and social activity.

4. Dieting causes weight cycling (yo-yoing up and down).

Research shows higher death rates are associated with weight cycling.

5. Dieters often feel tired, lightheaded, and have difficulty concentrating.

They may lack essential nutrients, including high quality iron, zinc, protein and sufficient calories.

6. Dieting leads to binge eating, disordered and chaotic eating.

Dieting disrupts normal eating. Dieters override inner signals of hunger and satiety, so they may no longer know when they are hungry or when they are full, and eat accordingly.

7. Dieting is the primary precursor to eating disorders.

Many experts believe the increasingly high rate of eating disorders in the U.S. is due, at least in part, to the high percentage of people who are dieting and restricting food.

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 natural survival trait defending against starvation.

9. Dieting diminishes women, and increasingly men and children.

Dieting focuses attention on appearance, rather than self-worth, talent and 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 yourself and others. You're okay, just as you are. Move on to healthy living – live actively, eat well, feel good about yourself – and let weight come off as a result, or not. You deserve the best, right now.