

The Next Diet Revolution

By Lisa Munniksma

From cabbage soup-only to cookies eaten to your heart's content, crazy fad diets are everywhere. While something as simple as drinking lemonade to lose weight may sound appealing, Deb Lightstone, a doctor of naturopathic medicine in West Lafayette, cautions these are mostly too good to be true.

"They don't teach you how to eat healthfully. They're not realistic for long-term use," she says. Also, "Some of them are pretty drastic in terms of calorie reduction, so they're not safe."

Rather than looking to these quick-fixes, women desiring to lose weight should adapt an overall healthy lifestyle with a balanced nutrition plan. Lightstone offers these simple tips:

1. Control portion size. Use smaller plates, avoid eating straight from the container, and ask restaurants to put half of your food in a to-go container at the beginning of your meal.
2. Read labels. Foods classified as "healthy," such as granola, yogurt and nut mixes, are often loaded with added fats, sugars and oils.
3. Avoid skipping meals, as that slows your metabolism.
4. Get some exercise daily. It's a no-brainer, but so few people do it.
5. Balance your food groups. On your dinner plate, half of the food should be vegetables, one-quarter proteins and one-quarter starch.
6. Eat until you're satisfied, not full. It takes 20 minutes for your body to register that it's actually full, so wait at least that long to fill your plate with a second helping.
7. Avoid carbonated beverages. Diet soda is not better than regular soda.

These tips should be employed by everyone for a healthier lifestyle. Women who are serious about losing a lot of weight or those with health issues should undergo a lifestyle change under the supervision of a health professional.