

[IMAGE]

Why You Need to Ditch Your Diet

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Yo-yo dieting is something that occurs a lot...both in and out of my clinic. I see it in my friends, family members, and my patients. Your body is a machine and you can cause serious damage to your health and metabolism when you are intermittently feeding it good fuel then sometimes bad fuel then sometimes giving it enough food but other times you are gorging or starving yourself. Stability and consistency is key to a healthy metabolism and body.

I recommend patients to start by setting up realistic expectations. If you establish a diet regimen that is too stringent, you won't be able to follow it for long. If you are too lax in your diet, you can cheat too often for the diet to have a positive impact on your weight and health. The key is to sit down and write down all your weight or health obstacles. Then set up a diet regimen that you know you can keep up over long term.

My integrative medicine patients in San Jose CA are regularly able to see me to address obstacles that come up in their diet. If you have the ability to see someone in your area who can do the same, that may help you stay on track with your diet. It's important to be honest with yourself in what your strengths and weaknesses are. By doing so, you can delineate how to set up a plan that can use your weaknesses in your favor to help you lose weight.

For example, I know that I am too lazy to drive out at night to pick up junk food. So, I keep my house free of junk food. That way, when I feel myself craving junk food or caving into temptation, I know that I won't have anything in the house to eat that would be junk. So, I took my weakness of being lazy after work hours and used it in my favor to keep from eating junk food by making sure my house has nothing bad for me to eat while knowing I won't go out to buy anything.

diet - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Studies suggest that people tend to lose weight easier and keep it off longer when they focus on losing weight for their health. So, perhaps focusing on a greater goal besides those pants you want to wear out next weekend can help you stay on track. If you have skin issues, allergies, headaches, irritable bowel syndrome or any other disease however mild or severe, just remember that a clean healthy diet can help improve your health...as well as help you fit into those pants next

weekend.

Many patients fall into the trap that all they need is exercise then they can eat whatever they want. But many snack and junk foods are so high in calorie that even an hour or two of exercise can barely help eliminate those calories. So, while I am a very avid exercise participant and I encourage daily activity, I also have to caution my patients not to then overeat at meals or snack times because they think they deserve it because they worked out. When it comes to weight loss, what you eat and how much you eat will always be most important in weight loss, but exercise can help you maintain the weight loss and push the weight loss at a faster pace.

At the end of the day, just remember to eat whole foods, straight from Mother Nature and not in processed forms. If you set up a realistic eating plan and add in exercise of some form on a daily basis even if it's walking or climbing stairs at work, you should be able to consistently keep the weight off if you make your plan do-able. Even when you go through crazy hectic times, sit down and revise your plan so it's do-able then as well. Just remember, if your habits are bouncing around and not consistent, your weight also is going to be bouncing around up and down...consistency and realistic planning is key.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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