High Protein Diets – Fads & Fiction:
One of the most popular versions of the fad diet today is the high-protein diet. I’m sure you all know somebody on a high-protein diet who’s lost 20 pounds in 30 days eating all the bacon, butter and bleu cheese dressing s/he wants. There’s just one hitch – something the authors of these diets won’t tell you about: If you’re trying to lose weight on a high-protein diet, you’re risking your health.

Wrong by Design: We are designed to run on carbohydrates. Glucose, one of the simplest, most basic carbohydrates, is our primary fuel. By our very design, the body needs carbohydrates to operate efficiently. Brain tissues, red blood cells and cells of the kidneys will ONLY use glucose as fuel.

Making yourself sick to lose weight: When you take the carbohydrates away, your body runs out of glucose and is forced to burn its secondary fuel – fat. When your cells burn fat instead of glucose, byproducts known as “ketones” are produced, creating a state called “ketosis,” which leads to a loss in appetite and significant water loss…and also to fatigue, nausea and low blood pressure. The severely carbohydrate-restricted diets simulate the metabolic state seen with low blood pressure. The severely carbohydrate-deficient diets cause dehydration. In fact, this is the main reason that the initial weight loss which leads to osteoporosis.

Sharp as a tack? Not anymore!: Another immediate effect you may notice on a high-protein diet is reduced mental capacity. A recent study shows that mental functioning is impaired by ketosis.

Another side effect -- Constipation: If you do choose to try a high-protein diet, make sure you have plenty of laxatives on hand. High-protein diets cause constipation because they are composed chiefly of foods (meat, fish and cheese) that are completely free of dietary fiber. Low-fiber diets are also believed to cause varicose veins, hemorrhoids and hiatal hernia.

Draining your body of its most important element: Carbohydrate-deficient diets cause dehydration. In fact, this is the main reason that the initial weight loss for people on these diets is so rapid.

Break out the breath mints: Keith Ayoob, professor of nutrition at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, warns about the bad breath caused by the high-protein diets. This unpleasant side effect is caused by the ketones produced when your body is forced to burn fat. Although halitosis isn’t physically damaging to you, it could seriously damage your social or business life.

The truth: Complex carbohydrates are the secret to health AND weight loss: A low-fat diet based on complex carbohydrates with the addition of fruits and vegetables will cause effortless, permanent weight loss without hunger, while promoting good health. You can eat delicious dishes, such as minestrone soup, chili, and bean burritos. You won’t ever have to make yourself sick again with fried cheese cubes wrapped in bacon. And it’s a program you can stick to – for the rest of your new, healthy, and long vital life!

1. JADA 77:265, 1980
2. Lancet 343:155, 1994

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This pamphlet is condensed from an article appearing in the Winter,2000, edition of EarthSave’s news magazine “Healthy People Healthy Planet.” You can read the entire article, including references, on-line at www.earthsave.org/news/hiprotein.htm. To request a copy of the news magazine, call EarthSave at 1-800-362-3648 or email us at information@earthsave.org

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Tips for Healthy Weight Loss

How to lose weight the healthy and natural way:

?? Eat a diet rich in unrefined complex carbohydrates, such as whole grains (bread, rice, pasta, cereals, etc.), starchy vegetables (potatoes, sweet potatoes, etc.) and legumes (beans, split peas, lentils, etc.).

?? Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Fresh is best, but frozen is good too!

?? Avoid fats and oils, including so-called “good” oils.

?? Avoid animal products, including meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, dairy products and eggs.

?? Avoid or limit refined carbohydrates, such as white flour, refined white rice and sugar.

?? Avoid or limit alcohol. Who needs the extra calories, not to mention the burden alcohol places on the body?

?? Be a label reader! Many unhealthful ingredients, including chemical additives, fats, animal products, excessive salt and excessive sugar can lurk in packaged, processed foods.

?? Exercise regularly. Find something you enjoy doing and stick with it. You don’t need to join an aerobics class…walking is great exercise, and costs you nothing!

?? Work with your doctor. If you are seriously overweight, if you are pregnant or nursing a baby, or if you suffer from serious or chronic illness, particularly that for which you take medication, always consult with your doctor before making any major change in your diet and exercise habits.

Join EarthSave to Stay Informed and to Educate Others

EarthSave’s greatly needed programs are actively helping people reclaim their health and restore our planet. By joining EarthSave, you learn how your food choices protect and improve your quality of life, and you become an active player in healing the environment.

Local EarthSave chapters throughout the world help further these goals by teaching people in their communities about healthy, compassionate and sustainable food choices.

For information on membership, on the chapter nearest you or for information on starting a chapter, call us at 1-800-362-3648 or email information@earthsave.org.

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