

Attention All Women: Diets Are A Recipe For Disaster

By Shondelle Solomon-Miles

Despite the fact that 95% of all dieters fail at achieving their weight loss goals, dieting is still the most relied upon method of weight loss, especially for women. In fact, according to Dr. Charles Harrington, an astounding 65 million people and 85 percent of all women are dieting at any given moment. So howcome, despite the overwhelming statistics that diet do not work for long term weight loss, do millions of women continue to rely on this ineffective method?

Well, the answer is twofold. First, we live in a society that glorifies being thin, and prefers a woman's dress size to be in the single digits. Let's face it, the media, entertainment and executive business positions are not exactly filled with the 'pleasingly plump' segment of society. Consequently, women are desperate for quick solutions, and therefore the many fad diets that promise fast results are appealing.

Second, the women who are willing to take a more patient (and effective) route are misinformed and genuinely believe that diets are the most efficient way to lose weight. Unfortunately, many of these women have never questioned the fact that Americans are fatter and unhealthier than ever before, in spite of the fact that we spend 32 billion dollars a year on diets and diet-related programs. Unfortunately, too many women have not realized that DIETS DON'T WORK!

So what's the problem with women dieting to lose weight? In a nutshell, diets encourage deprivation,

deprive the body of essential nutrients, create and nurture an obsession with food, and decrease the amount of calories your body uses for energy, or in simpler terms, slows metabolism.

Think about this. If you go ON a diet, the implication is that you'll eventually come OFF the diet. When you come off a diet, you usually resume eating as you did before the diet and regain the weight you lost (and more) because the diet slowed your metabolism and possibly encouraged bingeing episodes. Diets are not designed for long-term success. They are designed for the "quick fix" or to satisfy those who have a case of 'have it now' syndrome. Of course, if you eat nothing but cabbage soup for three days, or remove all carbs and fat from your diet, you will lose weight. You just won't keep it off because you cannot continue to eat this way for the duration of your life.

Besides the negative physiological impact dieting has on the human body, it also takes a psychological toll. When the inevitable happens, and your diet begins to 'stop working' (though it never really 'worked' in the first place), it breeds feelings of failure, incompetence, inadequacy, guilt, frustration and even depression. These are all negative emotions that perpetuate negative belief systems and a negative self-image, which potentially lead to unsupportive lifestyle habits and, consequently, more weight gain.

Am I saying that all diets are useless? No. What I'm saying is that if you develop a pattern of eating that is unrealistic for your lifestyle, that deprives your body of essential nutrients, and that you cannot maintain for the rest of your life, then you will likely continue to struggle with your weight. ✕