

The History of Diets

- 1700s** Dieting to reduce body weight emerges as a western concept. Trendy Madame de Pompadour, at 5'1" and 111 lbs., declares herself "**skeletally thin.**" The corset is invented.
- 1828** French food aesthete **Brillat-Savarin** suggests moderation, not for health reasons, but a sign as of refinement. Diets are de rigueur. **Godey's Lady Book** promotes fashionably thin models.
- 1864** **William Banting** drops 46 pounds eating mutton, eggs and vegetables, as described in his best-selling **Letter on Corpulence.**
- 1917** **Diet and Health** is first published by **Lulu Hunt Peters**, a chronically overweight person. Peters teaches readers about "**calories,**" a term previously used only in physics, and advises a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet.
- 1930's** Movie stars popularize the **Hollywood 18-Day Diet.** It consists of grapefruit, melba toast, green vegetables and boiled eggs.
- 1933** **Mayo Clinic's** scientific diet, the **Mayo Food Nomogram**, is mistaken for a complicated word game and fades into obscurity.
- 1939** Miracle diet pills, a.k.a. **amphetamines**, generate sales of **\$30 million** annually before the **FDA** steps in. Bathing-suit ad slogan: "**Suit by Jantzen. Body by Dexaspan.**"
- 1943** **Metropolitan Life** publishes **Ideal Weight Table** for women
- 1947** Psychoanalyst **Hilde Bruch** says the glandular theory of obesity is not true. "**The blubbery patient belongs not in the gym, but in the psychiatrist's office.**"
- 1951-52** The **New York Times** claims overweight is our number-one health problem. **Reader's Digest** admonishes wives to "**Stop Killing Your Husband.**"
- 1959** The **New York Times** now reports that Americans suffer "**a dieting neurosis.**" Gallup Poll finds 72 percent of dieters are women. **Metracal**, the first liquid diet proclaims: "Not one of the top 50 U.S. corporations has a fat president." Girdle sales reach record highs.

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- 1960** **Stillman Diet**, requiring eight glasses of water and filet mignon every day, is introduced. **Overeaters Anonymous**, inspired by AA is founded.
- 1961** A Queens, New York, housewife, **Jean Nidetch**, starts dieting discussion group. Seventeen years later, sells her **Weight Watchers empire for \$100 million**.
- 1963** **Coca-Cola** introduces **TAB**. However, men won't drink from a pink can.
- 1966** **Atkins Diet** published in *Harper's Bazaar*. Eggs, bacon even pork rinds allowed; broccoli is restricted.
- 1967** **Twiggy**, 5'7" and 91 lbs., appears on cover of *Vogue* four times.
- 1970** Seventy percent of American families using low-cal products; **10 billion amphetamines** manufactured annually.
- 1977** Liquid protein diets banned after **three deaths**.
- 1979** ***The Complete Scarsdale Medical Diet*** becomes a best-seller. Success is short-lived for creator, Dr. Herman Tarnower.
- 1982** **John Hopkins University** researchers calculate that Americans have swallowed more than **29,068** "theories, treatments and outright schemes to lose weight." NFL endorses Diet Coke for men.
- 1990** **Oprah Winfrey** loses 67 pounds on **Optifast**; one year later, Oprah gains back 67 pounds and declares, "No more diets!"
- 1992** The **National Institutes of Health** champions moderation and daily exercise as the best diet. Extreme obesity is declared a disease.

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- 1995** **Fen-Phen** (fenfluramin and phentermine) introduced to the market place as the new magic pill solution to weight-loss
- 1997** **Mayo Clinic** releases report claiming **fen-phen** causes **heart valve deterioration** and possible permanent **brain cell damage**. Manufacturer voluntarily **withdraws fen-phen** and **Redux** from the market.
- 2000** **American Home Products** continues to defend against more than 2,000 class action suits brought against the company by parties claiming damaged from the company's fen-phen-based products. **Weider Nutrition** settles with the FTC for "Unsubstantiated Claims for Dietary Supplements" for its Phen Cal products.
- 2002** **Atkins** returns along with **South Beach** as they and other **low-carb** diets become the new trend in weight-loss. **Body Solutions**, another quick-fix diet pill, files bankruptcy.
- 2003** **Ephedra-based** products are banned in California and other states as research points to overuse and abuse causing serious injury and or death. Obesity reaches highest levels in U.S. history.
- 2004** **Cortislim** is charged by the FTC for "claiming, falsely and without substantiation, that their products can cause weight loss and reduce the risk of, or prevent, serious health conditions.
- 2005** **Weight Watchers** and **Jenny Craig** continue to dominate the commercial weight-loss industry with new claims and new games. The USDA introduces the new **MyPyramid**. It creates even more debate among food experts and fitness professionals. **Atkins Nutritionals** files **Chapter 11**.

Throughout history, "Fitness" (proper nutrition and physical activity) continues to be the ONLY credible and long-term protocol / solution to weight-management.