**Day 30**

**Title: How to Review a Popular Diet with a Critical Eye**

Some diets have all the love. Only a few diets have all the research to back them up. It would be wrong to say that a poorly researched diet won’t work. Most diets do work. It’s true. Almost any diet will help you lose weight for a short period of time. However, developing life long health habits requires more discernment.

A quick fix diet is just that – a temporary solution. After a few weeks of deprivation, you’ll find yourself right back where you started. None the wiser, you’ll be looking again for a way to achieve your health and wellness goals.

**Slow and steady wins the race**

Time and time again, the people who lose weight and keep it off tend to lose it using a slow and steady method. People tend to choose a diet based on a number of factors, including recommendations from friends and family, cost, time, and ease of use. When seeking a diet you’re bound to get advice everywhere from the grocery store check-out line to your next door neighbor.

Don’t go for gimmicks. From the cabbage soup diet to Atkins and South Beach and now Paleo – popular diets will come and go. But with 2/3 of Americans either overweight or obese, it’s obvious that these diets haven’t worked. The Mediterranean Diet and DASH Diets are well researched and consistently regarded as two of the best diets for overall health. But somehow these are not winning any popularity contests.

**Choose diets wisely**

Before you jump on the next diet bandwagon, use this 8-point checklist to determine if your potential new diet is effective and sustainable.

*Remember: If you have a medical condition or want to achieve specific results, it’s best to consult with your doctor or registered dietitian before beginning any new diet regimen.*

1. The plan is nutritionally adequate. Does the diet provide a reasonable attempt to provide for the necessary vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients you need? You may need a registered dietitian to help sort through this one. Look out for red flags like forbidden fruits and vegetables, elimination of entire food groups (like carbohydrates), or a reliance on a limited number of foods for the duration of the diet, for example.
2. The calorie level is appropriate – in most cases at least 1,200 per day.
3. Weight loss recommendations are not over the top. For the average person 1-2 pounds per week is the reasonable. If the diet promises quick weight loss, run away.
4. The plan includes balanced food choices from all food groups including proper portions and serving sizes. Variety is the spice of life but also key to prevent boredom when following a specific diet plan. A lack of variety can lead to less compliance over time. No one wants to eat the same bowl of cabbage every day. And you shouldn’t.
5. Does the plan require you to purchase special supplements, paraphernalia, formulas, or foods many of which that can only be purchased from the diet maker? Beware. Though there are some good portion control serving plates and utensils on the market, balanced diets don’t require tons of expensive supplements or exotic formulations.
6. The program was created, researched, and/or delivered by credentialed staff makers – Registered Dietitians, Board Certified Physicians, and qualified exercise physiology professionals.
7. It includes a plan for weight maintenance. If the program leaves you hanging, it’s not sustainable. Does the diet encourage healthy behaviors for life or is it limited to a specific time frame? Fad diets are not sustainable. Once you stop following it (out of boredom or because it stops working or it makes you sick) you might regain the weight lost. You risk losing any progress gained.
8. It works with your lifestyle. The diet should provide reasonable flexibility so that you can realistically follow it.

In addition to these checkpoints, there should be an emphasis on the importance of adequate and safe physical activity and rest. We can’t promise you’ll make your goal weight in 2 weeks using this method but now you have some tools to help you choose a plan that may work for you.