

Is your diet making you hungry?



LGN's dietitian helps you avoid the most common weight-loss mistakes

When it comes to losing weight everyone you talk to seems to have a special trick that makes it easy, or at least that's what they claim. Many of us have heard advice like: "Don't eat fat." "Don't eat carbs." "Don't eat breakfast." See a pattern? The weight-loss advice is all about not eating something.

If you eat less food you'll certainly lose weight, but you'll also notice your stomach growling and an empty feeling in the pit of your stomach. Why? Because eating less makes you hungry. "One of the surefire ways to sabotage good diet intentions is getting too hungry," says registered dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner, a spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. Blatner adds: "Hungry people make bad food decisions."

It's a fact that it is tough to follow any type of diet on an empty stomach and countless diets fail simply due to hunger. Frequent hunger pangs also lead you to eat more often, resulting in too many calories. So, the real trick to success is making food choices that leave you feeling satisfied and energized but still help you lose weight.

"Breakfast prevents you from overeating the rest of the day"

By Heidi Reichenberger McIndoo, M.S., R.D., L.D.N.



There are common mistakes that many dieters make in their quest for a smaller waistline. As a dietitian, I'm continually seeing patients guilty of at least one if not several of these food faults. Here are some of the most common errors made by people losing weight, why these strategies don't work, and how to avoid them:

● Liquid Calories

Start every morning with a big glass of OJ? Sip on a smoothie for lunch? Grab a sports drink at the gym? If this sounds familiar, what you drink, not what you eat, may be a problem in your attempts to lose weight. "The problem with these drinks is that they can provide more calories than a huge plate of real food, and yet they are much less satisfying or filling," says Cynthia Sass, a registered dietitian and spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. After a day's worth of these drinks you'll have taken in approximately 1,000 calories but will either still feel hungry or your hunger will return quickly after each drink.

major culprits

Soda; sweetened, flavored coffee drinks including frappuccinos and lattes; frozen coffee drinks; smoothies; sweetened iced teas; and diet shakes.



the solution

Don't substitute meals and snacks with drinks, no matter what kind. Also, choose calorie-free liquids such as water or brewed unsweetened tea, and try cutting the size of calorie-dense beverages in half.

● Skipping Breakfast

No time for breakfast? Or maybe you're just not hungry in the morning.

Every day I hear a variety of excuses for skipping the morning meal. If you have a list of reasons to head out the door before filling your stomach, watch out, you're setting yourself up for diet failure. "Breakfast is a prevention meal," says Blatner. "It prevents you from overeating the rest of the day." While it would seem that cutting out an entire meal would make weight loss easy, your body is more complicated



than that. To prevent you from starving, your body burns fewer calories and you become hungrier during the day when you skip a meal. The result is you eat more frequently and consume larger portions than you need and lose less, if any, weight.

major culprits

Not allowing time to eat, not stocking your kitchen with quick and healthy breakfast foods, and gulping coffee in place of eating food.

the solution

Eat something in the morning. No time? Grab some fruit and yogurt on the way out the door. Not into breakfast foods? Try a turkey sandwich and a glass of milk. Can't eat early in the morning? Store a few instant oatmeal packets and boxes of raisins in your desk to eat at work.

● Low-Fiber Foods

Dull or colorful — which best describes the food you eat? Are you drowning in a sea of white rice, bread, and pasta with a little fish or chicken on the side? Or are your plates a rainbow of colors from a variety of fruits and vegetables along with shades of brown from whole grain breads and cereals? If your meals resemble the former, chances are you're hungry. You're missing out on the fill-you-up, fiber-rich foods. "Fiber is one of the best natural resources — it fills you up but

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fiber itself provides no calories," states Sass, who is also the coauthor of *Your Diet is Driving Me Crazy: When Food Conflicts Get in the Way of Your Love Life* (Marlowe & Company, 2004). Including this key nutrient in your diet makes losing weight easier and it helps protect you from several diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

“One of the surefire ways to sabotage good diet intentions is getting too hungry.”

STOP!
One frosted doughnut can have 235 calories and 13 grams of fat

major culprits

White pastas, rices, sweetened or low-fiber cereals, white bread and rolls, plain bagels and baked chips.

the solution

Bump up the fiber content. Trade in crispy rice cereal for some raisin bran. Add fresh fruit to your snack list. Dish up some red beans and brown rice for a quick dinner.

● Carbs Without Protein

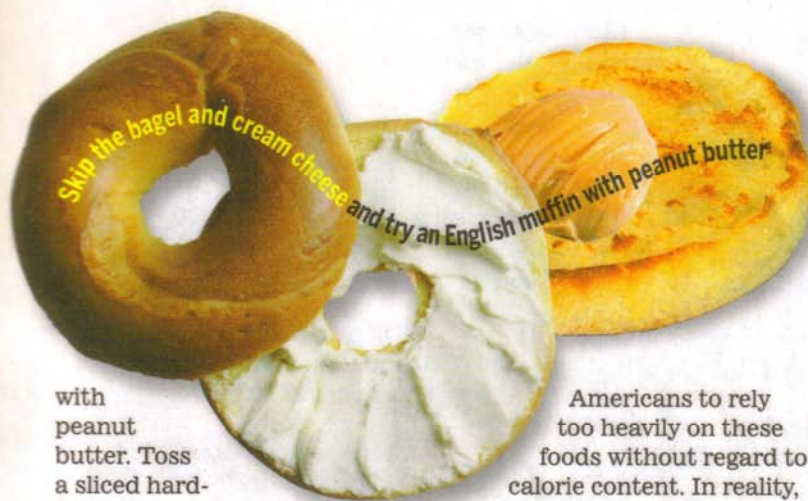
“There is one good thing we learned from the high protein diet craze . . . protein foods help people feel full,” states Blatner. Carbohydrate-rich foods such as breads, pasta and rice are digested and leave your stomach rapidly. Your body digests fruits and veggies pretty quickly too. On the other hand, protein-rich foods like meats, chicken, fish, nuts and eggs take longer for your body to break down and leave your stomach gradually. Spending the entire day filling up on high-carb/low-protein meals can leave you in a state of perpetual hunger, and that’s not a good plan when you’re trying to drop a few pounds.

major culprits

Big bagels, muffins, salads filled only with veggies.

the solution

Instead of carb-loading be sure to choose a small portion of carbs and a small portion of protein at each meal. Skip the bagel and cream cheese and try an English muffin



with peanut butter. Toss a sliced hard-boiled egg or some turkey breast slices into your salad. Try a yogurt instead of that muffin for a midmorning munchie.

● Relying on Reduced-Fat Foods

When opening your kitchen cupboards are you greeted by a sea of fat-free and low-fat foods? While these foods have their place, they're not magic bullets for weight loss. Sass notes, "People believe the myth that if it's fat-free or low-fat, any amount is O.K." This mistaken idea has caused

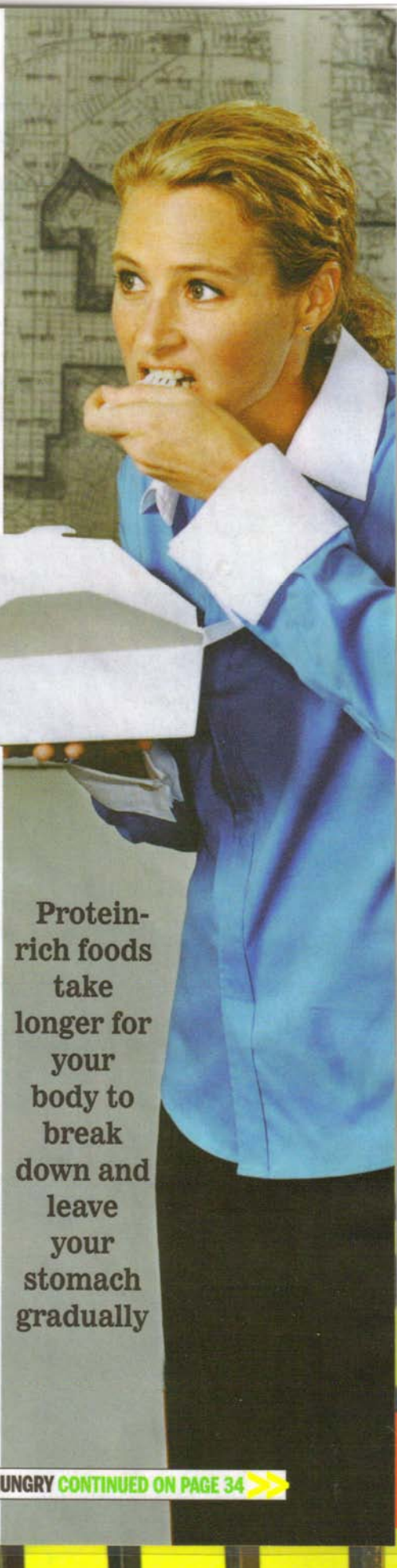
Americans to rely too heavily on these foods without regard to calorie content. In reality, these foods often have nearly the same amount of calories as the original. In addition, when fat is taken out it's usually replaced with sugar, a carbohydrate. Sugar is digested much quicker than fat and that makes you feel hungry again soon after eating.

major culprits

Fat-free or low-fat salad dressings, dips, chips, cookies, ice cream.

the solution

Include reduced-fat foods in your diet, but remember fat-free does not equal calorie-free. Also, make sure when eating reduced-fat foods that they either contain protein, such as low-fat yogurt and cheese, or you eat them with protein- or fiber-filled foods to help keep you feeling full longer. For example, when enjoying light ice cream, top it with some fiber-rich sliced bananas or blueberries.



Protein-rich foods take longer for your body to break down and leave your stomach gradually

Try a turkey sandwich for breakfast!



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Sample Menu hungry day

- 8:30 a.m.** Large (24 oz.) caramel mocha frappuccino (460 calories)
- 10:30 a.m.** Large cinnamon raisin bagel with 2 ounces light cream cheese (440 calories)
- Noon** 2 cups salad with 1/4 cup of light Italian dressing and a diet coke (128 calories)
- 2:30 p.m.** Diet Coke and a reduced-fat blueberry muffin (400 calories)
- 4:00 p.m.** 3-ounce bag baked potato chips (330 calories)
- 6:00 p.m.** 3-ounce skinless chicken breast, baked, 1 cup white rice, 1/2 cup steamed broccoli (322 calories)
- 8:30 p.m.** 1 cup fat-free frozen strawberry yogurt (200 calories)

Total Calories 2,280

Study these two menus. If your diet looks more like the hungry day, give the happy day a try. You'll feel more satisfied while getting fewer calories and losing weight.

Sample Menu happy day

- 7:30 a.m.** 1 packet plain oatmeal prepared with 1 cup nonfat milk, 1 tablespoon of raisins and a dash of cinnamon (220 calories)
- 8:30 a.m.** Large (20 oz.) cafe au lait prepared with nonfat milk (110 calories)
- 10:30 a.m.** 8 ounces of vanilla yogurt with 1/2 cup of strawberries (233 calories)
- Noon** 2 cups of salad with 3 ounces of turkey and 2 tablespoons of balsamic vinaigrette with 6 whole wheat crackers and a cup of nonfat milk (332 calories)
- 3:00 p.m.** 1/4 cup mixed dried cranberries and walnuts (144 calories)
- 6:00 p.m.** 4-ounce skinless chicken breast, baked, 1/2 cup brown rice, 1 1/2 cups steamed broccoli and cauliflower (296 calories)
- 8:30 p.m.** 1/2 cup of light ice cream topped with 1/2 banana, sliced, 1 tablespoon light chocolate syrup and 1 tablespoon light nondairy whipped topping (211 calories)

Total Calories 1,546

“Hungry people make bad food decisions”

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