

Nutrition and Health

Tip of the Month

Be 100 Percent Fad Free

Jennifer Nance

University of Illinois Extension Educator and Registered Dietitian

By now, New Year's resolutions are probably a faint memory. How well have you done with your resolutions to live a healthier, active lifestyle? Maybe you've tried one of the many fad diets to help get you on the right track. Maybe you've even had success with the diet you have chosen.

You can lose weight on virtually any diet because "eating less equals losing weight." But, can you maintain this weight loss over the long term?



The American Dietetic Association says the most effective long-term way to achieve a healthful lifestyle is to be *100% Fad Free*. Here are five tips to help you enjoy a *100% Fad Free* lifestyle:

- **Develop an eating plan for lifelong health.** Too often, people adopt the latest food fad or "quick fix" diet rather than focusing on overall health. Get back to basics and use the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid* as your guide to healthy eating.
- **Choose foods sensibly by looking at the big picture.** A single food or meal won't make or break a healthful diet. When consumed in moderation and appropriate portions, all foods can fit into a healthful diet.
- **Learn how to spot a food fad.** A key feature of a fad diet is the exaggerated claim that eating (or not eating) specific foods, nutrient supplements or combinations of foods may cure disease or offer quick weight loss.
- **Find your balance between food and physical activity.** Regular physical activity helps control body weight, promotes a feeling of well-being and reduces the risk of chronic diseases.
- **Food and nutrition misinformation can have harmful effects on your health and well being, as well as your wallet.** For reliable information, consult a registered dietitian. These professionals are uniquely qualified to communicate current and emerging science-based nutrition information, and they can help you develop a diet plan that meets your individual needs.

