

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership Media Statement



Diets: A review

The following has been compiled by qualified dietitians and nutritionists who are available for interview and additional comment.

<p>Context</p>	<p>Rising rates of obesity and associated conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and certain forms of cancer has led to increasing need for effective weight control strategies. Sensible, healthy eating guidelines are in place (supported by qualified nutritionists, dietitians and other health professionals) and yet we are continually bombarded with new radical diets, branded as the best.</p> <p>The basis of most diets whether it be Atkins, Dukan, or the 5:2, is to create a calorie deficit. Over time, consuming fewer calories than you need will lead to weight loss. However, the majority of these diets are fads; simply short term fixes promising miraculous results that don't address behaviour change in the long term. Which ones (if any) hold any truth?</p>
<p>Dukan Diet</p>	<p>The Dukan diet places its focus on eating fat and protein and omits carbohydrates (including fruit and vegetables). There is a gradual reintroduction of only a few fruit, vegetables and carbohydrates over four phases. The Dukan diet is similar to a ketogenic diet – forcing the body to burn fat instead of carbohydrates.</p>
<p>What we say</p>	<p>During the initial restrictive phase there will be rapid weight loss. This can be motivating but as foods are reintroduced it is common for weight to creep back on. There is limited research to support the Dukan diet as sustainable, healthy or more importantly nutritionally balanced. By ignoring fruit, vegetables and wholegrains dieters have to supplement vitamins and fibre. Such a restrictive low carbohydrate diet can lead to fatigue, potential digestive discomfort and nutritional deficiencies.</p> <p><i>*Please consult your GP before considering this diet.</i></p>
<p>Atkins Diet</p>	<p>The Atkins Diet 'Revolution' is focused on a significant reduction in carbohydrate in an attempt to balance insulin levels. As a high protein diet, the Atkins is similar to the Dukan diet in encouraging ketosis - switching from burning glucose (sugar) to using stored body fat as fuel.</p>
<p>What we say</p>	<p>Like any diet, if you can stick to it you will see weight loss. The problem is compliance. Initial side effects of the Atkins diet can include bad breath, tiredness and constipation from cutting out carbohydrates and fibre. The Atkins diet isn't nutritionally balanced. By limiting fruit and</p>

	<p>vegetables, it contradicts all the advice on healthy eating that we try to promote. The meal choices are limited so there's a risk many people will get bored quickly and give up.</p>
<p>5:2 Diet Intermittent Fasting</p>	<p>In its simplest form, the 5:2 diet allows you to eat a 'normal' number of calories five days a week and then for two non-consecutive days you just eat 25% of usual calorie total (500kcal for women, 600kcal for men). There are no restrictions on what foods you can eat, just the number of calories on the fast days. This diet has gained considerable following (primarily online) but is not supported by clinical evidence yet.</p>
<p>What we say</p>	<p>Although many of the claims link intermittent fasting to longer life and reduced risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer, these measurements have only been seen in animal studies. There are certain groups who should not fast especially children, pregnant women and those who are already underweight. Fasting days may leave you feeling dizzy or low in energy so it is really important to ensure you eat a balanced, nutritious diet on the non-fast days including fruit and vegetables, wholegrains and lean protein such as eggs, fish or poultry. Until this approach is based on evidence from human trials it should not be advised in clinic.</p> <p><i>*Please consult your GP before considering this diet.</i></p>
<p>Brighton & Hove Food Partnership position</p>	<p>If you are overweight, losing weight will bring about important health benefits. The Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) helps support residents of Brighton and Hove make realistic changes to their diet for the long term, and shows how they can incorporate lifestyle changes such as physical activity as part of the daily routine.</p> <p>The Community Nutrition Team states "the media is forever introducing new diets – few of which have any scientific credibility. To lose weight, there needs to be a change in behaviour. This often involves eating less and exercising more. Drastic crash diets and exercise regimes that promise rapid weight loss are unlikely to work for long because those changes cannot be maintained.</p> <p>The diets described above lack variety so there is a high risk of getting bored and giving up. Adherence to any diet, through realistic changes that also incorporate lifestyle, are key to change. The BHFP does not advocate strict, restrictive diets rather favouring a healthy approach. It is important to identify emotions and triggers that lead to overeating and develop strategies to cope without resorting to food. We aim to shift the mindset away from just focusing on what people should be eating to how they change their behavior in the long term changes."</p>