If you've ever wanted to lose weight in a hurry, perhaps you've been tempted to try a fad diet. Fad diets promise that you will lose weight quickly and easily. All you have to do is eat nothing but cabbage soup, eliminate an entire food group, or chew each bite of food 32 times and before you know it, the pounds will melt away. Mission accomplished. Well...sort of.

Fad diets are appealing because they promise rapid weight loss. Most fad diets restrict calories (often to an extreme) so most people will lose weight on these diets - at least in the short term. But you probably didn't gain those extra 10 pounds in one week, so should you really expect to lose them in one week? And keep them off?

Aside from their lack of nutritional value, the problem with fad diets is that they are not sustainable in the long term. (How many days can anyone really eat grapefruit at every meal?) Any weight lost while on a fad diet is usually only lost temporarily. When a normal diet is resumed, all the pounds lost (and sometimes even more) are regained.

Effective, long-term weight loss involves a simple equation: Consume fewer calories than you use. Calories consumed in a healthy diet provide a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. If a simple, easy-to-use plan is what you're looking for, skip the fad diet. Instead, start by simply eating slightly smaller portions of the good, healthy foods you already enjoy. No individual food needs to be eliminated. Then, to tip the equation even further toward a healthy weight, add regular physical activity to your plan.

Still want to try a fad? Lots of fads are a whole lot healthier for you than fad diets. Try disco dancing, or pet rock hunting, or playing twister, or roller skating, or kicking a hacky sack, or twirling a hula-hoop, or...

“How long does getting thin take?” asked Pooh. ~ A.A. Milne