Stop, Think, and Reckon before Dieting

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Stop, Think and Reckon
before Dietering

Health should be the most important factor to anyone planning a diet says Nancy Mason

If a sylph-like figure is one's ambition, a diet of wholesome common sense is highly recommended. Before dashing headstrong into a rigid denial of food consider a few important facts. Women, normal in weight at the age of 20, should gain from 10 to 20 pounds in their next 10 years.

Also there is the question of one's physical health. Go to a physician for a thorough examination. Let him be the judge of whether the weight gain is normal and healthy or whether it is abnormal obesity.

Should he decide the latter he will prescribe a personalized diet. Like clothing, a diet proves more effective when made for the individual. When recommending such diets, physicians or dietitians stress what can be eaten instead of listing the foods to be refused. Thus they avoid giving the impression that one will starve while losing weight.

The average college woman requires 2,200 to 2,400 calories per day. This provides for one pint of milk, one-half egg, two servings of high protein food, four pats of butter, two servings of whole grain cereal, bread or breakfast cereal, potatoes, two servings of both fruits and vegetables and 200 calories for dessert or extra portions.

It is possible to cut the calorie intake to 1,500 or 1,800 per day and still maintain health and lose weight. The minimum protective diet provides 1,000 to 1,200 calories per day. To be healthful it must include the building foods: milk, egg, potatoes, fruits and vegetables. However, an active college student should never attempt the minimum except under the direction of a physician.

Eyebrows will raise at the inclusion of potatoes in a reducing diet, but contrary to popular belief one cannot lose any appreciable amount of weight by denying oneself this vegetable. True, it contains large percentages of starches but it also contains valuable minerals and vitamins which the body needs for the building of tissues. The potato contains much bulk because of its watery content and thus satisfies the appetite long before it adds weight.

Persons who have a tendency towards obesity will do well to exert their will power when tempted by the energy foods. They include such delectables as pastries, candy, rich desserts, cokes and other fountain favorites such as malted milks and ice cream dishes. Exclude fried foods, salad dressing, fats and large amounts of popcorn. As little as one small chocolate per day may add several pounds over a number of months' time—and who stops with one chocolate?

Excess weight shortens the span of life, decreases activity, increases fatigue and makes a person short of breath. High blood pressure and diabetes often accompany obesity. Again the fact is stressed, however, that before one takes dieting into her own hands, she should visit a physician. Fad diets may permanently injure the health.

"Girls active as college students need three square meals a day," Dr. Margaret A. Ohlsen, College Hospital Dietitian, declares. Following this all important rule one need not be hungry between meals, when it is a temptation to eat fattening foods such as candy bars or other sweet refreshments. If it is a gain in weight one wants, Dr. Ohlsen says one of the quickest ways to add pounds is to eat in-between meals.

Eating at least one food at each meal which contains satiety value will check in-between hunger. A definition of satiety value, literally speaking, is that quality of a food to appease the hunger until the next meal. Potatoes have much satiety value, another reason for not omitting them from the daily diet.

Milk is another such food because of its protein content. One glass of skim milk will keep one satisfied longer than almost any other food and adds little or no weight.

Perhaps mid-morning or mid-afternoon hunger has become such a habit with most persons that "piecing" is merely a psychological problem. Dr. Ohlsen advises directing attention to some other interest when one is in this state of mind.

A piece of ham eaten one night is likely to send the hands of the scale around a few notches further the next day. This is because the large amount of salt in ham does not allow it to be readily excreted from the body.

For such reasons as this, daily weight means nothing. Weekly weighings over a period of at least a month are much more reliable. Keep a chart of these trips to the scale and look at the first and last records on the chart as well as the fluctuations from week to week.

Health can be maintained while streamlining the figure by following these simple rules:

1. Consult a physician before attempting to lose weight. He will give each person an individual diet.
2. Eat three meals a day and avoid "piecing."
3. Exercise daily. No one can lose weight by a reduced diet alone.
4. Drink a pint of milk daily.
5. Eat sufficient bulk for a normal daily bowel movement.
6. Exert will power and refuse rich foods, candy, cokes, malted milks and other fountain drinks.
7. Remember that a record of weight kept over a period of a month or longer is more reliable than daily weighings. One should not feel defeated if she is not losing weight rapidly for women as active as college students normally should not lose more than two to three pounds per month.

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