



# NE LESSON CODE NR-000-13

## Fad Diets

### OBJECTIVES

- Participants will be able to recognize a fad diet from brief descriptions.
- Participants will be able to list two red flags of fad diets.
- Participants will be able to set one realistic goal to enhance their health.

### MATERIALS

- Chalk board, flip chart or dry erase board
- Chalk or dry-erase markers/pens
- Handouts:
  - *Red Flags of a Fad Diet* handout and poster, attached; make copies as needed.
  - *Red Flags*, attached, please make copies as needed.
  - *5 Steps to a Healthy Weight, handout and poster*, attached; make copies as needed.
  - *Eat Well, Be Well*, Stock no. 13-169 English, 13-169A Spanish, and 13-169V Vietnamese

#### **Note about New Lesson Survey Forms:**

The first few times a new lesson is presented, staff and participants need to complete the survey forms attached at the end of this lesson. Please note that the *Staff Survey Form* is different from the *Participant Survey Form*. Only 10-20 participant surveys need to be completed. Please mail completed New Lesson Surveys to:

Delores Preece  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
Nutrition Services Section  
1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street  
Austin, Texas 78756

## TEACHING PREPARATION

Note to the instructor: before teaching the lesson, familiarize yourself with the popular diets that are available today by studying the fact sheet: **Popular diets: how they compare**. This will help you answer any questions that come up. If the question cannot be answered with information from the fact sheet, do not try to answer the question, let the participant know that you or someone in the office will get back to them with the answer. Ask your local agency registered dietitian for further assistance.

Read through the entire lesson before teaching it so that you are prepared for the activity.

Decorate a bulletin board with the *Red Flags of a Fad Diet* poster and the *5 Steps to a Healthy Weight* poster.

## ICEBREAKER

Introduce yourself and ask the class the following:

**How many of you know someone who is trying to lose weight (it might even be you)?**

Then ask:

**How are they trying to lose weight? What are they doing differently? Is anyone you know trying a special diet?** Write the responses on the chalkboard, flip chart or dry-erase board. If no one wants to share, ask if they know anyone who has purchased a new book or has started eating different foods.

## DISCUSSION

**You are not alone if you know someone who is trying to lose weight. Over one-half of all Americans are overweight, and many people are confused and frustrated by trying to decide what to do to lose weight. Why do you think people are gaining weight these days?** Write down the responses. Possible answers:

- Routinely eating more calories with:
  - Larger portions
  - Foods that are high in calories, but low in nutrients, like regular soda.
  - Fewer fruits and vegetables
  - Food more readily available all day – vending machines, drive-thrus
- Moving less (getting less physical activity)

Conclude by saying: **For most people, being overweight comes from eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity.**

**Why is it important to have a healthy weight?** Write down the responses. Possible answers:

- For health
- To look and/or feel good
- Prevent disease (heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer)
- Save money
- Be a good role model for children

**People choose to lose weight for many reasons. People often say they want to lose weight to feel more energetic or to look their best. But, the most important reason is for health.**

**As we discussed, most of the time, people are overweight from eating too many calories and not being active. This may put them at risk of getting heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and some types of cancer.**

Write the numbers in the next two paragraphs on the board: **But, every year, we try to lose weight. Actually, more than 50 million (50,000,000) Americans go on diets each year, and they spend over \$30 billion (\$30,000,000,000) dollars a year on products that promise to make it easier to lose weight. These products include pills or supplements, books, special foods, and weight loss programs.**

**But, out of the 50 million (50,000,000) or more people that go on diets and actually lose weight, only 5% are able to keep the weight off. That's only 5 out of every 100 (5 out of 100) people! What a waste of time, energy, and money! Now, let's take a look at some of these products that are taking so much of our time and money.**

**What are some examples of popular ways to lose weight that you have heard of?** Write down the responses. Possible answers:

- Low Carbohydrate/High Protein, such as:
  - Atkins
  - South Beach
  - Sugar Busters
  - The Zone
- Eat Right for Your Blood Type
- Grapefruit Diet or Cabbage Soup Diet
- Dr. Phil's plan

- Weight Watcher's
- Jenny Craig
- Low fat
- Slim Fast or other meal replacement plans
- Diet pills or supplements
  - Examples: Cortislim, Trimspa, Metabolife, etc.
  - Look at examples that were listed during the ice breaker, if applicable

**Has anyone ever heard the term “fad diet”?** Wait for brief responses.

**Do you know what a fad diet is?** Wait for responses, and then say – **fad diets are a short-term, quick fix approach to weight loss that don't result in success in the long run. These diets tend to over-promise results, but don't deliver. The foods allowed may be much of the same thing over and over, so it's hard to stay motivated for very long.**

**Also, some fad diets may have health consequences, such as putting the dieter at risk for heart disease or causing dizziness or stomach problems. But, since many people don't stay on these diets for very long, the biggest problem is that so much time and money is wasted, because in the end the dieter is not able to keep the weight off long term. Then they end up in the same place they started, or some people gain weight, so they are heavier than before they started the fad diet!**

**In fact, yo-yo dieters – or people that repeatedly go on diets, lose weight, go off the diet, and then gain weight – often end up being able to store fat easier and therefore put on weight easier. Yo-yo dieting can also lead to health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes.**

**So, how can you tell if something is just another fad, or if it's the real deal that will teach healthy habits that will last a lifetime – and help you achieve a weight that is healthy for you?**

**Let's review this handout together.**

Pass out handout: *Red Flags of a Fad Diet* and review with participants. Have the participants take turns reading the “red flags” out loud if they are willing and comfortable reading in front of a group. Otherwise, read over each red flag.

## ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Pass out the Red Flags. If there are enough participants, give each person a red flag, or group participants together so that each group has one or more red flags. Then say: **Now that you know how to spot the red flags of fad diets, I am going to read some promises, claims and instructions from diet plans and weight loss products. Each of you has one of the red flags that we discussed. As soon as you hear the red flag you are holding in the description that I read, hold it up for all the class to see. There may be more than one red flag for each diet or product that I tell you about, so more than one of you may be holding up a flag for each description. Use your fad diet handout to help you identify which red flags you hear.**

Read the descriptions below to the participants. You do not have to read them all, just as many as time allows. Just be sure to include description #11 – end your activity with the #11, even if you don't do them all! If they do not get all the red flags for each description, read the others to them. Tell the participants that **it is ok if they did not get every red flag.**

FYI: Some of the red flags are implied, but not directly stated. For example, in the 1<sup>st</sup> description, the plan does not directly say that you do not have to exercise to lose weight. We have included it as a red flag because you can't tell from the description, and often people believe that all they have to do is take the pill or eat special foods, and they will lose weight. Our goal is to teach the participants that it is a lifestyle change combining healthy eating habits and regular physical activity that leads to a healthy weight.

- 1) **Lose 30 pounds in 30 days by following our easy 30-day diet plan developed by Dr. Quick Fix.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 2) **Hi, I'm supermodel, Susan Winters, so I'm an expert on dieting. All you have to do is drink my specially formulated "Hollywood Potion," every day, three times a day, and you can lose weight as easily as I can!**

Red  
Flags!

Sounds too good to be true.  
Magic foods or supplements  
No need to exercise

- 3) **During the Introduction phase, you are only allowed to eat 20 grams of carbohydrate each day, from foods like salad and other non-starchy vegetables. See our list of acceptable vegetables, and only eat those and you'll lose your first 10 pounds in a week.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Magic foods or supplements  
Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 4) **To lose weight, the calories you eat must be exactly broken down into 40% from protein, 40% from fat, and 30% from carbohydrates.**

Red  
Flags!

Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 5) **It's not your fault you're overweight. Scientific studies suggest that stress can cause the body to overproduce a hormone that stores fat. The solution is our pill called Cortislender. In addition to helping to control your fat storing hormone levels, Cortislender's combination of vitamins, minerals and herbs help balance blood sugar, reduce cravings and maximize your metabolism, which all help to boost fat burning.**

Red  
Flags!

Sounds too good to be true  
Magic foods or supplements  
No need to exercise

- 6) **Eating too many carbohydrates causes obesity and other health problems. If you eliminate carbohydrates from your diet, you will lose weight quickly and easily. Eat as much meat as you want. Never be hungry and lose weight fast.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 7) **Do not combine protein and carbohydrate foods at the same meal. If you do, you will have stomach problems since each type of food requires a different environment for digestion.**

Red  
Flags!

Specific food combinations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 8) **Your blood type determines your diet, supplements and personality because it is the key to your body's entire immune system. If you follow the specific eating plan and take our specially formulated supplement combinations for your blood type, while avoiding the foods that are toxic to your blood type, you will lose weight quickly and easily.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Magic foods or supplements  
Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Specific food combinations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 9) **Drink a Slimquick shake for breakfast, eat a Slimquick bar for lunch and eat a sensible dinner. That's all you have to do to lose weight easily.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Magic foods or supplements  
Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

- 10) **Make the special cabbage soup, which can be eaten at any time during the day when you feel hungry, and you can eat as much of it as you wish. Follow our simple diet plan, which is as simple as this: day one – eat all the fruit you want, except bananas; and eat the soup. Day two – eat all the vegetables you want, except dried beans, peas and corn; and eat the soup. For dinner, have a baked potato and butter. Do not eat fruit on day two. You will lose at least 5 pounds the first week.**

Red  
Flags!

Rapid weight loss  
Sounds too good to be true  
Bizarre quantities and limitations  
Specific food combinations  
Rigid menus  
No need to exercise

\*\*\*Include this description last, even if you don't read all 10.

- 11) **Aim for a healthy weight. Choose a variety of foods every day and moderate your intake of fat and sugar. Choose at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Be physically active every day.**

**Red  
Flags!**

No red flags! These are examples of a healthy eating and activity plan.

Conclude by saying: **As you noticed, most of these diets or products had more than one red flag and none of the fad diets that we discussed recommend physical activity (except the last one, which wasn't a fad diet)! Now that you know what to look for, you can choose a healthy eating and activity plan with confidence.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/EVALUATION

Point to the answers written down from the ice breaker and ask: **Were any of these fad diets?**

**All of the plans and products that I described were taken out of real books or advertisements of popular products that are on the market today (we just changed some of the names). Why do you think these plans or products are so popular? Possible answers:**

- Promise easy and quick weight loss
- Someone they know has tried the diet and it has worked, at least short-term
- Takes the blame off the dieter – puts the blame on certain foods that they were told to eat
- They offer a different approach to what has already been attempted and failed

**There are many foods and many ways to build a healthy diet and lifestyle. Setting a few simple healthy eating and activity goals can help anyone achieve and maintain a weight that is healthy for them.**

**We will teach you basic tips to get you on your way, in case you (or someone you know) have been tempted to try the next fad diet. Look how simple it can be!**

Pass out the handout: *5 Steps to a Healthy Weight*. Discuss points on handout. Then say: **The first step in either losing weight or making any positive change in your health is to set a realistic goal. Choose a tip from the *5 Steps to a Healthy Weight***



handout to use as your goal to start working on today. Or, make up a goal of your own. Write your goal on the bottom of the handout and keep it in a place where you will see it every day. It may take several weeks for you to achieve this goal, but once you do, you will feel great.

I have a few tips about setting and achieving goals:

- Instead of choosing a goal that is focused on how much you weigh, choose a goal that is focused on something you can do – such as increasing the number of fruits and vegetables that you eat or to stop eating when you are full, instead of overeating.
- When setting your goal, remind yourself that healthy bodies and happy people come in all sizes and shapes, and that no one body shape or size is a healthy one or right one for everybody.
- Don't try to do it all at once, start small. For example, if you are not doing anything for physical activity now, start by walking a block a day, before you know it, you'll be up to 1 or 2 miles a day!

Pass out *Eat Well, Be Well* brochure. Tell them that **it has more tips for staying healthy and includes a 4-day meal plan!**

**Thank you for coming to class!**

**NE LESSON CODE NR-000-13**  
**Fad Diets**  
**Participant Survey Form**

LA # \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. I am: (you may circle more than 1)**

- a. Pregnant
- b. Breastfeeding
- c. Parent of an infant
- d. Parent of a child
- e. Family or friend

**2. How much did you like the lesson?**

- a. A lot
- b. A little
- c. Not at all

**3. Do you plan to use this information?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**4. Do you think this is a good lesson to use at WIC?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. What is the most useful thing you learned from the discussion today?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your comments!*

**NE LESSON CODE NR-000-13**  
**Fad Diets**  
**Staff Survey Form**

LA # \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Was the lesson easy to read and follow?**

- a.    yes                    b.    no

**What changes would you suggest for improving the lesson?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Was the participant feedback:**

- a.    positive            b.    negative            c.    indifferent

**3. Was the Spanish translation appropriate for your participants?**

- a.    yes                    b.    no

**4. Do you plan to use this lesson again?**

- a.    yes                    b.    no

**5. Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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*Thank you for your comments!*