



FOOD FOR THOUGHT *Weight-Loss Diets for the Long-Term*

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The latest reports from the Center for Disease Control reveal that 61% of Americans are overweight or obese (defined as Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 25). This comes at a time when physical activity is declining and caloric consumption is increasing. Yet despite decades of dietary advice to limit fat intake, incidence of obesity continues to increase^{1,2} and health professionals and consumers alike are looking for weight-loss diets that will work for the long-term. In this issue we will consider the following:

-  What is the role of fat in a weight-loss diet?
-  What makes a weight-loss diet successful?
-  What is an example of a moderate-fat, weight-loss eating plan?

Low-Fat Versus Moderate-Fat Diets

Researchers at Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston put 101 people on one of two calorie-controlled weight-loss diets—one low in fat (20% of calories from fat) and one moderate in fat (35% of calories from fat).³

In this free-living study, both groups received similar diet counseling from a registered dietitian. The participants were given instructions for maintaining the appropriate level of fat in their diets and limiting calories. Dietitians also gave advice on dining out and supplied the participants with sample meal plans, but the dieters were able to make their own food choices.

At the end of the study, researchers found that three times as many people were able to stick to a healthy moderate-fat diet than those following the low-fat diet, which is traditionally recommended for weight loss. Furthermore, those in the moderate-fat group were able to

keep the weight off for over 18 months, had better nutritional intakes and were more satisfied with the moderate-fat diet. Research has shown that foods like peanuts and peanut butter satisfy hunger longer than low-fat, high-carbohydrate foods like rice cakes.⁴ The moderate-fat diet was full of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats from foods like peanuts, peanut butter, vegetable oils and avocados.

The subjects in the low-fat group found the diet harder to stick with and less palatable. Interesting, the overall nutrition profile of the diet was better in the moderate-fat group compared to the low-fat group. (See page 2.)



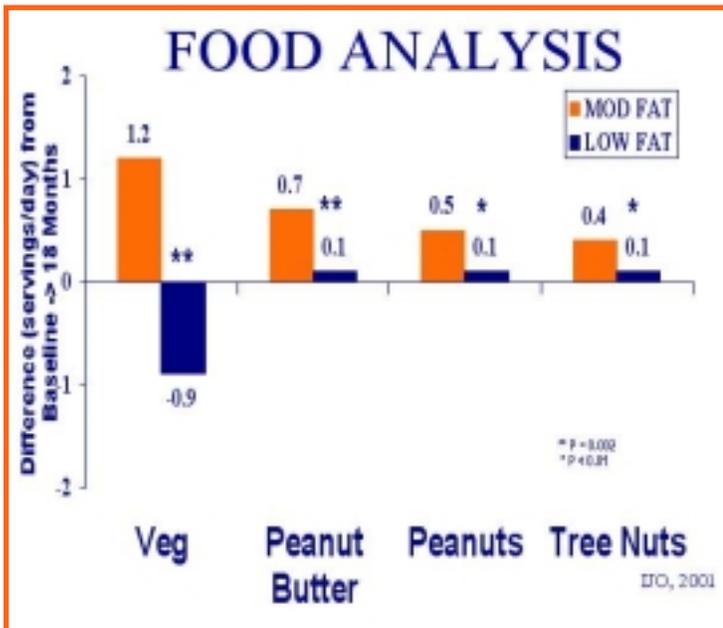
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Better Nutrient Profile with Moderate-Fat Diet

In addition to losing more weight over the long-term, those in the moderate-fat group had better nutritional intakes and reported feeling more satisfied because they could eat some of their favorite foods each day such as peanut butter, nuts and healthy oils, in a “Mediterranean-style” eating pattern.

Although participants were given dieting advice and sample meal plans (see page 3), they made their own food choices. Dieters in the moderate-fat group increased peanut butter consumption by almost a serving (2 tablespoons) per day, increased peanut consumption by a half a serving (1/2 ounce or a small handful) and increased tree nut consumption by almost half a serving over their baseline diets. Other foods such as healthy oils (olive, peanut and canola) and avocados were added in small

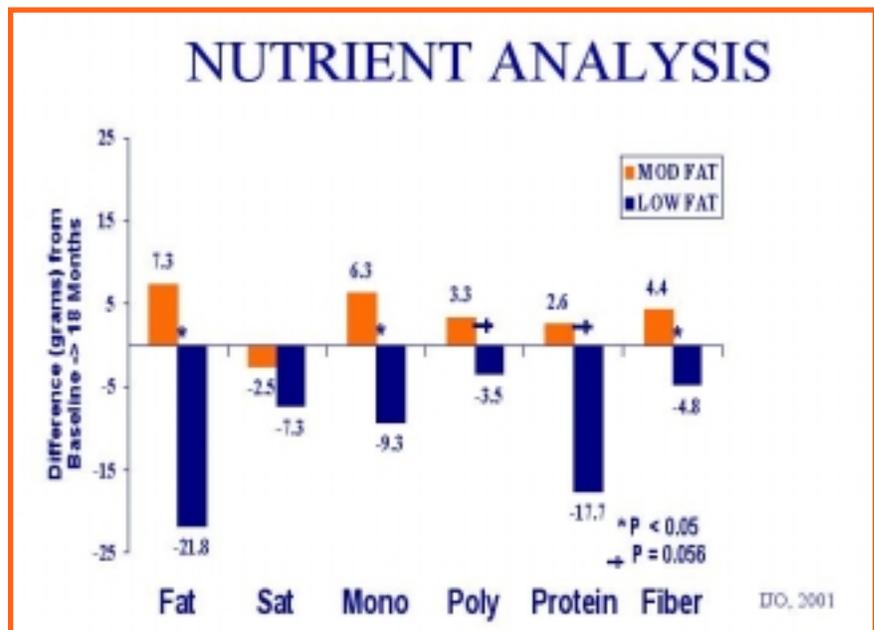


“My patients reported many failed attempts at weight loss with low-fat diets. But with the calorie-controlled, moderate-fat diet, they didn’t feel like they were dieting -- they could eat favorite foods like peanut butter and nuts, which were once on a dieter’s forbidden list.”

Kathy McManus, MS, RD, Brigham and Women’s Hospital, Boston, MA

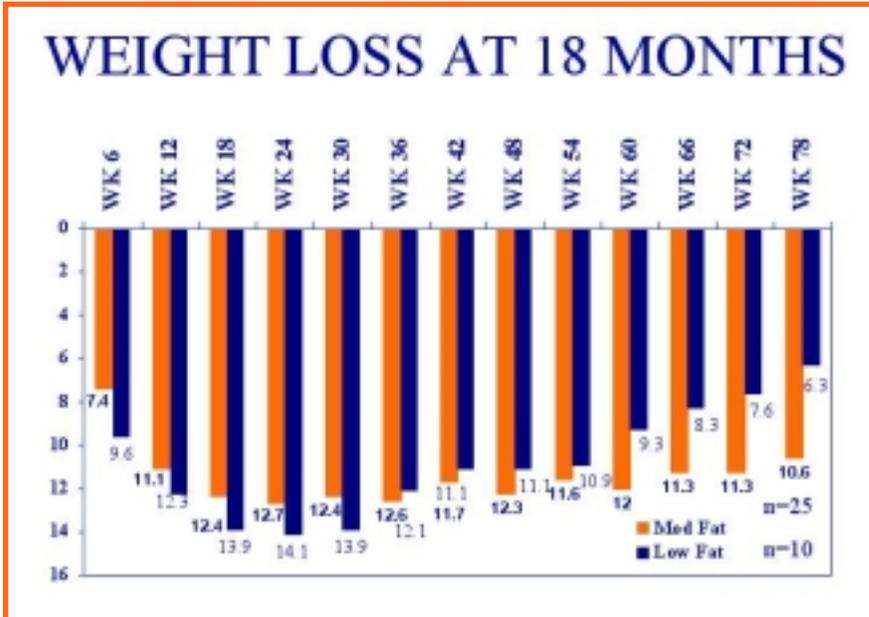
amounts.³

A surprise finding to the researchers and the dieters themselves was that those in the moderate-fat diet group increased consumption of vegetables by one serving per day. Intake of fiber was also increased significantly, and the moderate-fat group tended to eat more protein compared to their baseline diets. In contrast, the low-fat group decreased their consumption of vegetables and fiber compared to baseline.³ Kathy McManus, co-investigator in the study, says, “When participants could add some fat to vegetables, they tasted better.” Participants sauteed mixed vegetables in a little olive oil or dipped celery and carrot sticks in peanut butter.



More Weight Loss Over the Long-Term

Both the moderate-fat and low-fat groups saw weight loss in the first six to twelve months of the study. But as the study progressed, those in the low-fat group slowly saw the weight come back. By eighteen months, those in the low-fat group tended to be heavier than at baseline (by 6.4 pounds on average). Those in the moderate-fat group were able to stick with the diet and maintain a significant weight loss.²



Meal SAMPLE MEAL PLAN FOR MODERATE-FAT DIET

Breakfast

- 1 cup cantaloupe
- 1 slice whole-wheat toast with 2 tsp. peanut butter
- 1 cup coffee non-fat yogurt
- Non-caloric beverage (water, tea, coffee, etc.)

Lunch

- 1 cup minestrone soup
- Tomato & Mozzarella Cheese Sandwich
(1 oz. fat-free mozzarella cheese, 2 tomato slices, 2 slices whole-wheat bread, 1 tsp. mustard)
- Non-caloric beverage

Snack

- 1 oz. oil-roasted peanuts

Dinner

- 4 oz. broiled or baked swordfish
- 1 large baked sweet potato
- 5 mushrooms
- 1 cup asparagus
- Salad (1 cup mixed greens, 1 tbsp. oil & vinegar)
- 1 cup strawberries
- Non-caloric beverage

Evening Treat

- 3 rye crisp crackers
- 1 tbsp. chunky peanut butter
- 1/2 cup non-fat milk

Nutrients for the Day: Calories 1512; Fat 57.2g/34.0% of calories (Sat 11.4g/6.8%, Mono 28.8g/17.1%, Poly 12.9g/7.7%); Cholesterol 73 mg; Sodium 2511 mg; Fiber 31.0 g

Nutritional Analysis by Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Healthy Tips for Life

Busy lifestyles often dictate our eating behaviors, which affect our body weight and general fitness level. But new research shows that simple diet modifications can make a significant positive impact.⁵

Dining Out Tips

- ¥ Share your meal with a friend. Or bring half home for dinner the next day.
- ¥ Learn what portion sizes look like, such as a half-cup of mashed potatoes and three ounces of lean meat.
- ¥ Choose foods that are grilled or broiled instead of fried or sauteed.
- ¥ Ask for salad dressings and sauces on the side.
- ¥ Choose tomato-based sauces instead of those made with cream or cheese.

New research shows you can get the same health benefits from 10-minute increments or 30 minutes of continuous exercise daily.⁶ This means that the Surgeon General's Recommendation⁷ of 30 minutes of exercise each day is within reach. Try these activities:

Active Activities

- ¥ Increase your steps every day. Keep track with a pedometer and make it a friendly competition among friends and family.
- ¥ Walk the dog. If you don't have a dog, offer to walk your neighbor's dog.
- ¥ Buy a video tape and learn new exercises yoga, Pilates, or kick-boxing.
- ¥ Park your car farther away from your destination and take the stairs.
- ¥ Jog in place or lift weights while you are watching TV.



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The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthful lifestyles.



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