



Special Diet Considerations

Low-calorie Diets

Low-calorie diets usually are suggested to help with weight loss. Like all sound diets, they offer a healthy assortment of foods but in controlled quantities so that the sum total of calories consumed will be fewer than the body uses in the course of a day.

Diabetic Diets

Diabetic diets are designed to help keep blood sugar within the range of normality. They are prescribed if a person lacks or suffers from inadequate amounts of insulin, the sugar-lowering hormone. All diabetic diets restrict carbohydrates. Since diabetics are prone to heart disease, some diabetic diets also restrict saturated fats. Nevertheless, they include a great variety of foods and clear guidelines are provided by a doctor or dietitian for the quantities allowed to help diabetics live comfortably and successfully with this disorder.

Low-fat Diets

Low-fat diets offer a wide range of foods essential to good nutrition while reducing the amount of fat eaten daily. They pay careful attention to the fat content of all foods; not only obvious fats (e.g., butter, oil, margarine, etc.), but also the fats hidden in certain foods (e.g., well-marbled meats, cheeses, nuts, and even some fruits, like avocados). Though some doctors disagree, many favor low-fat diets for people with gall bladder problems.

Low-cholesterol Diets

Low-cholesterol diets are prescribed when there is danger that the cholesterol levels in the blood may be elevated beyond the point of good health. Foods high in saturated fats also may have adverse effects, so these diets often limit such foods as well. They are designed to prevent the potentially harmful effects that too much cholesterol may have on arteries and the heart, and to minimize the amount of cholesterol taken in with food.

Low-sodium Diets

Low-sodium diets are prescribed when a physician finds that a person is consuming more sodium (salt) than his/her body can handle, and that s/he is retaining more water in body tissues than is believed healthy. These diets are frequently suggested in the treatment of high blood pressure. In addition, doctors often prescribe sodium restrictions for patients with heart problems or with certain kinds of liver conditions. Those on a low-sodium diet, soon learn that although the saltshaker is one highly visible evil, there are dozens of others hiding in unexpected places, even in a package of frozen peas.

Bland Diets

Bland diets are primarily concerned with preventing or relieving irritations of the stomach and intestinal tract. These diets, most commonly associated with ulcers, favor a minimum amount of highly seasoned foods and sometimes emphasize small, frequent feedings.

High-fiber Diets

High-fiber diets encourage the use of foods that include substantial amounts of dietary fiber. Roughage (a synonym for dietary fiber found in foods like bran, whole-grain cereals, some raw vegetables, and many other foods) is the key word in the fiber diets. Dietary fiber works by absorbing moisture and adding bulk to other foods during passage through the intestinal tract; in a sense, it acts as a natural laxative. High-fiber diets are recommended by many doctors who believe that greater bulk in foods and frequent elimination of body wastes can help prevent certain diseases like cancer of the colon and diverticulosis.

Renal Diets

Renal diets are very special diets. They are designed to help the body cope with kidney malfunctions and are almost always worked out on an individual basis. They retain a wide variety of foods that will deliver most of the nutrients needed, and they require close attention to intake of certain proteins, potassium and other minerals.