

Expert suggests top four reasons why diets fail

January 7 2013

The battle of the bulge is on—any movement on the scale yet? "Losing weight is one of the top resolutions made every year, yet only 20 percent of people achieve successful weight-loss and maintenance," says Jessica Bartfield, MD, internal medicine who specializes in nutrition and weight management at the Loyola Center for Metabolic Surgery & Bariatric Care.

Despite that fact that two-thirds of Americans say they are on a diet to improve their health, very few are actually decreasing in size. "Dieting is a skill, much like riding a bicycle, and requires practice and good instruction," says Dr. Bartfield. "You're going to fall over and feel frustrated, but eventually you will succeed and it will get easier."

According to Dr. Bartfield, here are the top four reasons why many dieters fail to lose weight:

1. Underestimating Calories Consumed

"Most people (even experts!) underestimate the number of calories they eat per day. Writing down everything that you eat- including drinks and "bites" or "tastes" of food - can help increase self-awareness. Pay attention to serving sizes and use measuring cups and spoons as serving utensils to keep portions reasonable. Food eaten outside of the home tends to be much larger portion sizes and much higher in calories. Try to look up [nutrition](#) information of your favorite take-out meal or

restaurant and select a healthy meal before picking up the phone or going out to eat.

2. Overestimating Activity and Calories Burned

"Typically you need to cut 500 calories per day to lose 1 lb per week. This is very difficult to achieve through exercise alone, and would require 60 minutes or more of vigorous activity every day. A more attainable goal would be to try to increase activity throughout the day and get a total of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise most days of the week. Buy a pedometer and track your steps; try to increase to a goal of 10,000 steps per day. But be careful- exercise is not an excuse to eat more!"

3. Poor Timing of Meals

"You need a steady stream of glucose throughout the day to maintain optimal energy and to prevent metabolism from slowing down. Eat breakfast every day within one hour of waking up, then eat a healthy snack or meal every three to four hours. Try not to go longer than 5 hours without eating a healthy snack or meal to keep your metabolism steady."

4. Inadequate Sleep

"Studies have shown that people who get fewer than six hours of sleep have higher levels of ghrelin, which is a hormone that stimulates appetite, particularly for high- carbohydrate/high- calorie foods. In addition, less sleep raises levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, which can lead to weight gain."

Dr. Bartfield regularly counsels patients through the Loyola Center for

Metabolic Surgery & Bariatric Care, which offers surgical as well as non-surgical [weight loss](#) programs. "A registered dietitian, behavioral psychologist, exercise physiologist and a physician plus a surgeon if appropriate, all partner one-on-one with patients," said Bartfield. "Good health practices are more than just learned, they become a regular habit and a way of life."

Provided by Loyola University Health System

Citation: Expert suggests top four reasons why diets fail (2013, January 7) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-expert-diets.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.