



# The History of Diets

In order to understand the “shape” of weight-management, today, it’s helpful to know the evolution of the industry.

World-wide obsession with dieting has been around for hundreds of years. The ideal figure has been sought since it was painted on vases. Now, of course, it's plastered on billboards, printed in magazines, displayed on TV and all over the internet.

The following is a recap of some of the more interesting and famous diets.

**1700's** - Dieting to reduce body weight emerges as a western concept. Trendy Madame de Pompadour, at 5'1" and 111 lbs., declares herself "skeletal thin." The corset is invented.

**1828** - French food aesthete Brillat-Savarin suggests moderation, not for health reasons, but as a sign of refinement. Diets are de rigueur. Godey's Lady Book promotes fashionably thin models.

**1864** - William Banting drops 46 pounds eating mutton, eggs and vegetables, as described in his best-selling Letter on Corpulence.

**1917** - Diet and Health is first published by Lulu Hunt Peters, a chronically overweight person. Peters teaches readers about "calories," a term previously used only in physics, and advises a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet.

**1930's** - Movie stars popularize the Hollywood 18-Day Diet. It consists of grapefruit, melba toast, green vegetables and boiled eggs.

**1933** - Mayo Clinic's scientific diet, the Mayo Food Nomogram, is mistaken for a complicated word game and fades into obscurity.

**1939** - Miracle diet pills, a.k.a. amphetamines, generate sales of \$30 million annually before the FDA steps in. Bathing-suit ad slogan: "Suit by Jantzen. Body by Dexaspan."

**1943** - Metropolitan Life publishes Ideal Weight Table for women.

**1947** - Psychoanalyst Hilde Bruch says the glandular theory of obesity is not true. "The blubbery patient belongs not in the gym, but in the psychiatrist's office."

**1951-1952** - The New York Times claims overweight is our number-one health problem. Reader's Digest admonishes wives to "Stop Killing Your Husband."



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**1959** - The New York Times now reports that Americans suffer "a dieting neurosis." Gallup Poll finds 72 percent of dieters are women. Metracal, the first liquid diet proclaims: "Not one of the top 50 U.S. corporations has a fat president." Girdle sales reach record highs.

**1960** - Stillman Diet, requiring eight glasses of water and filet mignon every day, is introduced. Overeaters Anonymous, inspired by AA is founded.

**1961** - A Queens, New York, housewife, Jean Nidetch, starts dieting discussion group. Seventeen years later, sells her Weight Watchers empire for \$100 million.

**1963** - Coca-Cola introduces TAB. However, men won't drink from a pink can.

**1966** - Atkins Diet published in Harper's Bazaar. Eggs, bacon even pork rinds allowed; broccoli is restricted.

**1967** - Twiggy, 5'7" and 91 lbs., appears on cover of Vogue four times. 1970 Seventy percent of American families using low-cal products; 10 billion amphetamines manufactured annually.

**1977** - Liquid protein diets banned after three deaths.

**1979** - The Complete Scarsdale Medical Diet becomes a best-seller. Success is short-lived for creator, Dr. Herman Tarnower.

**1982** - John Hopkins University researchers calculate that Americans have swallowed more than 29,068 "theories, treatments and outright schemes to lose weight." NFL endorses Diet Coke for men. 1990 Oprah Winfrey loses 67 pounds on Optifast; one year later, Oprah gains back 67 pounds and declares, "No more diets!"

**1992** - The National Institutes of Health champions moderation and daily exercise as the best diet. Extreme obesity is declared a disease.

**1995** - Fen-Phen (fenfluramin and phentermine) introduced to the market place as the new magic pill solution to weight-loss

**1997** - Mayo Clinic releases report claiming fen-phen causes heart valve deterioration and possible permanent brain cell damage. Manufacturer voluntarily withdraws fen-phen and Redux from the market.

**2000** - American Home Products continues to defend against more than 2,000 class action suits brought against the company by parties claiming damaged from the company's fen-phen-based products. Weider Nutrition settles with the FTC for "Unsubstantiated Claims for Dietary Supplements" for its Phen Cal products.



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**2002** - Atkins returns along with South Beach Diet as they, and other low-carb diets, become the new trend in weight-loss. Body Solutions, another quick-fix diet pill, files bankruptcy.

**2003** - Ephedra-based products are banned in California and other states as research points to overuse and abuse causing serious injury and or death. Obesity reaches highest levels in U.S. history.

**2004** - Cortislim is charged by the FTC for "claiming, falsely and without substantiation, that their products can cause weight loss and reduce the risk of, or prevent, serious health conditions."

**2005** - Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig continue to dominate the commercial weight-loss industry with new claims and new games. The USDA introduces the new MyPyramid. It creates even more debate among food experts and fitness professionals.

**2006** - Hoodia, a plant-based appetite suppressant, begins heavy marketing to U.S. markets without much success. Jenny Craig introduces new weight-loss programs starring celebrities including Kirstie Alley, Vallerie Bertinelli and Queen Latifah.

**2007** - TrimSpa agrees to pay \$1.5 million in January to settle allegations of false and misleading advertising brought by the Federal Trade Commission. In February, TripSpa spokesmodel, Ana Nicole Smith is found dead from a drug overdose.

**2008** - NutriSystem introduces new Advanced Program with pre-packaged foods delivered to consumers' doors. Endorsees include former Miami Dolphins Quarterback, Dan Marino, Coach Don Shula as well as several other sports celebrities.

**2010** - Weight Watchers, NutriSystem and Jenny Craig continue to dominate commercial weight-loss industry. Bariatric or Lap Band surgery increases to become almost mainstream with its advertising campaign: "Let your new life begin with 1-800-GET-SLIM." Several insurance companies cover the procedure. New diet drugs awaiting FDA approval include: Lorcaserin, Qnexa and Contrave.

**2010/2011** - Obesity reaches new record levels in U.S. as 12 million Americans are considered severely obese, defined as more than 100 pounds overweight. Costs are estimated at \$147 billion per year.

**Throughout history, "Fitness"** (proper nutrition and physical activity)  
**continues to be the ONLY credible protocol**  
**for long-term weight-management.**