

Spring – which diet is the best

Spring has arrived at last; with the daffodils flowering and the birds singing we can look forward to some warmer and hopefully sunny days. When we start to shed our winter woollies then we notice those extra pounds that have crept on over the winter. Thoughts tend to move toward the dreaded weight loss diet.

Over the next few weeks I am going to look at the different types of diet regimes. I would say at the outset that yes I have dieted but since becoming a Nutritionist I now believe that lifestyle changes that can be maintained are the key to a healthier, fitter and slimmer you.

I thought it would be interesting to look at The Atkins Diet first as this is probably the most popular and controversial diet ever invented. This diet involves eating high protein foods, meat, eggs, cheese etc., and limiting foods that are high in carbohydrates or foods which have a tendency to raise blood sugar levels. The diet works on the principle of ketosis, a process by which excess body fat is burned as fuel, resulting in a rapid weight reduction. The Atkins Diet definitely works and is extremely effective for temporary weight loss but the strong consensus of opinion amongst health professions is that this diet is bad for your health and puts your body under stress.

The Atkins Diet equates to poor nutrition of the body with the risk of potential problems, including long term bone health because with high protein intake the excretions of calcium increase. Also if there are underlying problems with your liver or kidneys this diet puts a strain on these organs as they have to work harder to assimilate proteins and their fat content. It increases your risk of heart disease because of the high levels of LDL cholesterol you are ingesting and digestive health suffers because it is a low fibre diet. Although you may lose weight quickly particularly in the first few days you are actually losing muscle glycogen (stored energy within the muscles) and body water. I would certainly never recommend this diet.

Next week I will be looking at fad diets including the "Cabbage Diet".

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