

Battle of the Diets

Low-carb, no-carb, heart-healthy: Confused about the many diet plans on the scene?

BY KEVIN ALLMAN

Here's the real skinny on five eating plans you may have heard about: Atkins, Ornish, raw foods, South Beach and Zone diets. We have broken them down so you can see

which one might be right for you, and consulted two nutritionists — Melinda Manore, PhD, RD, and Suzanne Girard Eberle, MS, RD — to get their opinions.



	THE HISTORY	10 WORDS OR LESS	TYPICAL MENU	NO-NOS	MANORE SAYS	EBERLE SAYS
ATKINS	Begun in 1972 with the publication of <i>Dr. Atkins' Diet Revolution</i> , it had a major resurgence in 2002.	High-protein, low-carb	Meats, fish, eggs, cheeses, leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables	Carbohydrates, sugar	"You can lose weight, but it's not a diet for active people."	"I'd say no. If you try it, get medical supervision. Make it short-term."
ORNISH	It was popularized by the book <i>A Program for Reversing Heart Disease</i> by Dean Ornish, MD.	No meat, cholesterol or saturated fats; Emphasis on complex carbs	Whole-wheat products, vegetables, legumes, grains	Fat	"It's healthy, but it's way too spartan. You can't eat out very much."	"People can lower heart disease, but it can be challenging to do."
RAW	Dating back in some form to the 19th century, raw food became popular again in the last decade.	Only uncooked and unprocessed foods, preferably organic	Vegetables, grains and their derivatives	Any food that must be heated	"It's high in fiber, but you're not going to get some micronutrients."	"It's not good for active women — it can be very low in protein."
SOUTH BEACH	Introduced in 2003 by Florida cardiologist Arthur Agatston, MD, it continues to have a loyal following.	"Good" carbs and "good" fats	Grains, vegetables and unsaturated fats	High-fat, high-carb	"It's a healthier selection, but it doesn't push physical activity."	"It's low-calorie, and much of it is too low for an active woman."
ZONE	The Zone diet, from Barry Sears, MD, claims to balance hormones rather than count calories.	40% carbs, 30% protein, 30% fats	Various foods in strict percentages	Imbalance in the carb/protein/fat ratio	"It's very hard to know if you're getting the right percentages."	"You can lose weight, but it's very difficult to figure out."

from the experts

Not surprisingly, our nutrition experts aren't fans of any overly restrictive eating plans, though both said they would work with clients who want to try these diets. Manore's suggestion? An eating program without undue

restrictions and with lots of support, such as Weight Watchers. "But I'm not in favor of any diet that doesn't push physical activity."

"Food is not the enemy!" agrees Eberle. "I would concentrate on how to eat — eating

well at all three meals, working with portions and healthy snacks."

Both Eberle and Manore stress that people should consult a doctor or nutritionist before making any big changes in their diets. □