

# Why you should avoid crash diets

## How much weight should you lose?

As part of Whelehans weight loss clinic, we show you how to work out your body mass index (BMI) and how this is an accurate indicator of your ideal weight. . You can also measure your waist-hip ratio using a tape measure to see if you need to lose weight. You can do this by dividing the measurement of your waist (lower part of your ribs) by that of your hips (at the widest part). This shouldn't be over 0.9 for men or over 0.8 for women.

If you are overweight and want to be a healthier weight, you should set realistic goals. Weight loss of around 0.5 to 1kg (1 to 2lb) per week is about right. Any more than this and you may become de-motivated with too harsh a regime.

## Problems of Crash Diets

### Problem 1 – Loss of muscle.

When you lose weight too fast, you run the risk of not only losing weight, but you will also lose muscle. Losing muscle will affect your ability to lose fat and then you end up making your body basically work against itself to lose weight.

### Problem 2 - Crash dieting slows down your metabolism.

If you lose weight too quickly, you tend to lose a lot of lean body tissue as well as fat. When this happens, your metabolism slows down, which means that your body needs fewer calories to function day to day. That's why the weight piles back on so quickly once you go back to your usual eating habits. Your body has adjusted to a lower calorie intake, so excess calories are stored as fat when you return to your normal diet.

### Problem 3- Loss of essential nutrients

By not eating properly, you deprive your body of natural nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, etc. The lack of nutrients damages your immune system and makes you vulnerable infection and illness. You will also feel weak throughout the crash diet period.

### Problem 4- loss of essential fluids

When your body takes in fewer calories, it tends to use up more fluids to compensate for the difference. This loss of water in your system could also lead to dehydration, and dehydration may lead to chills, headaches, loss of appetite, and dry mouth/skin.

### Problem 5- can affect your mental health

Your mental health can be affected as depriving the body of its needs and desires can cause a low mood and reduced concentration. Crash dieting can make you so focused on weight loss that you are less able to fully participate on other activities.

### Problem 6- crash dieting is not a long term solution.



Most people that crash diet rebound with a stronger appetite than they had previously simply because their body still wants the higher amount of calories that it was used to before the diet. This leads to quick weight gain because by this point your metabolism is so slow that it can't burn the calories as fast as before. You end up gaining the weight that you lost right back in record time.

## **Changing your lifestyle**

You don't become overweight by eating the occasional chocolate bar or cream cake if you have an otherwise healthy, balanced diet. Becoming overweight and slimming down to a healthy weight (and then maintaining it) is really about lifestyle habits. Successful weight loss is more to do with shifting these patterns than with poring over the precise calorie content of every food you eat.

Most people find it easier to lose weight by using a two-pronged approach that combines increased physical activity with a lower-calorie diet. To lose weight, you need a balance where more calories are going out (through activity) than are coming in (through eating). To stay at a healthy weight you need to keep the two in balance across the weeks and months.

Healthy eating and exercise are also topics in the Whelehans Weight loss programme.

## **Are you obsessed by your weight?**

Ireland has an increasing problem with obesity, and many people would benefit from losing some weight. But it's equally important to emphasise the dangers of becoming obsessed with losing weight. In its extreme form, this can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

People with anorexia starve themselves. Symptoms include an intense fear of gaining weight, lower than normal body weight and the person saying they are fat even when they are very thin. Someone who is bulimic typically eats exceptionally large amounts of food then vomits, and may take laxatives or diuretics to purge him or herself. These problems can be life-threatening, and anyone who is affected needs to seek medical help as these individuals have an altered perception of themselves and food.

## **Free Weight Loss Clinic**

Whelehans now have a free weight loss clinic where you get free and comprehensive support and information to help you lose weight. You can get weighed on a weekly basis and we calculate your body mass index. The consultation is done in a private room with a trained professional so confidentiality is assured. You can find out how our Tone & Slim programme can help you lose weight. You can also find out about the new weight loss drug Alli<sup>®</sup>. Call in to our store or Dial 04493 34591 for more information.

**Disclaimer: Please ensure you consult with your healthcare professional before making any changes recommended**

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans, log on to [www.whelehans.ie](http://www.whelehans.ie) or dial 04493 34591. You can also e-mail queries to [info@whelehans.ie](mailto:info@whelehans.ie).