

## The Truth about Fad Diets

Retrieved from: The American Dietetic Association [www.eatright.org/nnm](http://www.eatright.org/nnm)



Volume LXXIV \* March 24, 2008

Note: To reflect this year's National Nutrition Month theme, 'Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact', the Eat Smart newsletters for the month of March will focus on nutrition myths that can trip you up.

To wrap up National Nutrition Month®, this week's Eat Smart newsletter spotlights this annual campaign one last time. The key message behind this year's theme, **Nutrition: It's a Matter of Fact**, is to separate fact from fiction by getting nutrition information from reputable sources and making informed choices rather than falling prey to food myths and fad diets.

To demonstrate how impractical (and oftentimes unhealthy) many fad diets are, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) created a 'fad diet timeline.' Below is a selection of fad diets included in that timeline (to view the full timeline go to <http://www.eatright.org/nnm/timeline.swf>).

- **1903 – Horace Fletcher's 'Fletcherizing' Diet:** Chew food 32 times before swallowing
- **1925 – The Cigarette Diet:** "Reach for a lucky instead of a sweet"
- **1930 – Hay diet:** Protein and carbohydrates not allowed at the same meal
- **1950 – The Grapefruit diet:** Also known as the Hollywood diet
- **1986 – Rotation Diet:** Rotating number of calories taken in from week to week



*A diet consisting of nothing but grapefruit? Sure, you may lose pounds quickly on fad diets like this, but in the long run you are better off with a balanced eating plan, combined with regular physical activity.*

The ADA reminds us to look at the big picture – you may lose pounds quickly on a fad diet, but in the long term you are less likely to maintain that loss. It's better to develop an eating plan you can follow for life, combined with regular physical activity. Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for the current *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

- For more on fad diets from the American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org>