

Drop 13 Pounds in 14 Days

A crash course in the South Beach Diet program, by the cardiologist who made losing weight taste great

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I'm not a diet doctor, but I can help you lose weight. A lot of it. In less time than you'd ever think was possible. The secret is a revolutionary new diet I developed while working with overweight men and women who visited my cardiology practice in Miami.

Back then, I had no idea that I'd someday be writing a best-selling diet book called *The South Beach Diet*. All I knew was that many of

my patients -- more of them each year -- were overweight. I'd recommend the popular diets of the time, but no matter which diet I chose, most patients ended up failing miserably. The diets either were too hard to stick with or just didn't work quickly enough to keep people motivated. And no single diet ever worked for every one of my patients.

Since I never found the ideal diet I was searching for, I did the next best thing: I developed a diet myself. And that's how the South Beach Diet was born.

EAT MEAT, NOT POTATOES

The diet I've put together isn't low-carb. Nor is it low-fat. Instead, it's a plan designed to help you separate the good carbs and fats from the bad ones, so you eat more of what's good for you and less of the bad stuff. It's a diet centered around lean, high-protein foods -- beef, pork, chicken, fish, nuts, and dairy products -- along with whole grains, vegetables, and other healthy carbohydrates.

Eat the right foods and you'll not only lower your cholesterol, reduce your risk of heart disease and diabetes, and eliminate many of the food cravings you struggle with each day -- but you'll also melt away the pounds.

The South Beach Diet is divided into three phases; we're going to focus only on phase one of the program. It's the strictest portion of the diet, but also the most effective -- ideal for getting rid of a few unwanted pounds, or as the start of a long-term weight-loss program.

CARBOHYDRATES MAKE MEN FAT

Humans are genetically conditioned to store fat. It's part of a survival strategy designed to see us through times of famine. The problem now, of course, is that we rarely experience famine, just feast. And as a result, we store fat but never burn it off.

Much of our excess weight comes from the highly processed carbohydrates found in baked goods, breads, and other sweet snacks. Eat too many of these foods too often and your body

starts to change the way it processes food. The insulin you need to convert carbohydrates to energy becomes less effective, and instead of burning the food you're eating, you start to store more and more fat -- usually around your midsection.

So, the goal of the first phase of the South Beach Diet is to get your insulin level back under control. This will not only help you lose weight quickly, but also help you eliminate unhealthy cravings, especially for sweets, baked goods, and other starches.

To that end, you start the diet by cutting carbs. Not all carbs, mind you, just the ones your body uses the fast- est. This means saying goodbye to a laundry list of foods you likely eat all the time: potatoes, fruit, fruit juice, bread, cereal, rice, pasta, pastries, and carbohydrate-laden vegetables like beets, carrots, and corn.

Don't worry. You aren't giving up any of these foods forever. Just for 2 weeks. Long enough to lose some weight and recondition your body to use insulin more efficiently, so that you can better deal with these carbs when you gradually add them back to your diet later on.

And, while you can't enjoy all of your favorite carbohydrates, you can still eat foods that break down more slowly in your body -- things like salad, tomatoes, zucchini, snow peas, cucumbers, broccoli, and asparagus.

In addition to those carbs that have less of an effect on blood sugar, you'll also be eating lots of protein. Lean sirloin and top round steak, turkey and chicken breast, seafood, fish, lean pork, low-fat cheeses, nuts, peanut butter, and eggs -- all are accepted parts of the South Beach Diet.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU EAT?

You may have noticed that I haven't brought up the issues of portion sizes or calories or any of the other restrictions you typically hear about with other diets. That's because there are none. Nobody wants to walk around carrying a rule book that tells him how to eat. That's why your only guideline come mealtime is that meals should be of normal size -- enough to satisfy your hunger, but no more than that.

A DAY AT THE BEACH

A typical day on the South Beach Diet could begin with a two-egg omelette, Canadian bacon, and a glass of skim milk. Whatever you do, don't skip breakfast. Not eating first thing in the morning causes blood sugar to drop, triggering powerful cravings at lunch. Whether or not you feel the need for a midmorning snack, you should be ready for one by 10:30. Yogurt or a stick of part-skim mozzarella cheese would be ideal.

When lunch rolls around, opt for salad -- lettuce and tomato topped with grilled chicken and a vinaigrette dressing, perhaps. Don't skimp on portions. The point of this diet is to eat well. In the afternoon, have a handful of almonds or pistachios as a snack to keep energy levels high.

For dinner, you can pick from grilled salmon, baked chicken, even London broil. Fill the rest of your plate with vegetables and salad and you've got a great meal.

End your day with dessert. Foods like sugar-free gelatin will satisfy your craving for something sweet without wrecking your progress from earlier in the day.

So there it is. A 2-week plan that can jump-start your weight-loss program. And the diet gets better, because as you progress you add more carbohydrates into your diet -- so eventually you can eat all your favorite foods, while maintaining your ideal weight.