

Weighing the Evidence in Diet Ads

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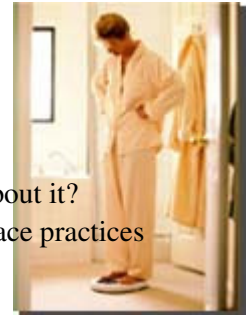
Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about the subject of this reading? What questions do you have about it?

Definitions: Federal Trade Commission – agency that works to eliminate deceptive marketplace practices

Skepticism – a doubting or questioning attitude

Carbs – abbreviation for the word carbohydrates which are sugars and starches



Reading

17 Flip through a magazine, scan a newspaper, or channel surf and you see them everywhere: Ads that
37 promote quick and easy weight loss without diets or exercise. Wouldn't it be nice if, as the ads claim, you
58 could lose weight simply by taking a pill, wearing a patch, or rubbing in a cream? Too bad claims like that
are almost always false.

62 Doctors, dieticians, and other experts agree that the best way to lose weight is to eat fewer calories
80 and increase your physical activity so you burn more energy. A reasonable goal is to lose about a pound a
100 week. For most people, that means cutting about 500 calories a day from their diet, eating a variety of
119 nutritious foods, and exercising regularly.

124 When it comes to evaluating claims for weight loss products, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
139 recommends a healthy portion of skepticism. Before you spend money on products that promise fast and
155 easy results, weigh the claims carefully.

161 "Lose weight without diet or exercise!" Achieving a healthy weight takes work. Take a pass on
177 any product that promises miraculous results without the effort. The only thing you'll lose is money.

193 "Lose weight no matter how much you eat of your favorite foods!" Beware of any product that
210 claims that you can eat all you want of high-calorie foods and still lose weight. Losing weight requires
228 sensible food choices. Filling up on healthy vegetables and fruits can make it easier to say no to fattening
247 sweets and snacks.

250 "Lose weight permanently! Never diet again!" Even if you're successful in taking the weight off,
265 permanent weight loss requires permanent lifestyle changes. Don't trust any product that promises once and
280 for all results without ongoing **maintenance**.

286 "Block the absorption of fat, carbs, or calories!" There is no magic non-prescription pill that will
302 allow you to block the absorption of fat, carbs, or calories. The key to curbing your craving for those
321 "downfall foods" is portion control. Limit yourself to a smaller serving or slimmer slice.

335 "Lose 30 pounds in 30 days!" Losing weight at the rate of a pound or two a week is the most
356 effective way to take it off and keep it off. At best, products promising rapid weight loss are false. At
376 worst, they can ruin your health.

382 "Lose weight with our miracle diet patch or cream!" You've seen the ads for diet patches or creams
400 that claim to melt away the pounds. Don't believe them. There's nothing you can wear or apply to your
419 skin that will cause you to lose weight.

427 Be skeptical of the numerous diet ads you see. Your health and your pocket-book will thank you!

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Level 6.5

Understanding

1. What is a healthy amount of weight to lose per week? _____

2. What is the best way to achieve weight loss? _____

3. What are “downfall foods”? _____

4. Why should people stay away from the diet gimmicks? (List at least two reasons.) _____

5. Why do people get “hooked” by these diet gimmicks? _____

6. How can people curb their cravings? _____

7. What does the word **maintenance** mean in this reading? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What’s your experience with advertised diet products? Have you or someone you know tried any? What were the results?
