

## The 3 Day Diet



The 3 Day Diet is another fad diet, dating back to 1985, promising quick weight loss, cleansing, lower cholesterol, and increased energy. However, no diet book exists to substantiate the science behind the "unique metabolic reaction."

Often mistakenly called The Cleveland Clinic Diet, the 3 Day Diet is a regimented plan that must be followed exactly for three days at a time, followed by normal eating for four or five days before opting to resume the plan again.

Followers of the 3 Day Diet are promised up to a 10 pound weight loss in three days, although realistically, most of that weight is likely due to fluid loss and not the more desirable fat loss.

The 3 Day Diet is a very specific food plan that must be followed precisely. Portions must be eaten exactly as specified and dieters are warned not to overeat -- otherwise the promised 10 pound weight loss may not be achieved. Likewise, dieters should not under-eat, even if they are not hungry. The detailed plan does not mention or recommend any exercise.

### How It Works

By some unspecified magical force, the combination of the suggested foods included in this plan is supposed to create a unique metabolic reaction and boost fat burning.

Without an author or book, there is no documentation or explanation of how the 3 Day Diet food combinations burn fat, increase energy, cleanse the body, or lower cholesterol.

As the name suggests, the 3 Day Diet lasts only three days, though it's said that it can be repeated indefinitely, as long as you alternate with 4-5 days of undefined "normal eating." The purpose of returning to your usual eating style is to keep your metabolism from slowing, reverting to fat-storing, starvation mode.

### What the Experts Say

Make no mistake: the 3 Day Diet is not associated with the prestigious Cleveland Clinic. "There is no such thing as a Cleveland Clinic diet," says Cindy Moore, director of nutrition therapy at The Cleveland Clinic. "It is an urban legend that is not nutritionally sound, and the only reason it causes weight loss is because it is so low in calories, not because of any food combinations or metabolic reactions."

Following a plan with fewer than 1,000 calories a day concerns Moore. "The plan yields about 1,000 calories a day which has the ability to lower metabolism so when you revert back to normal eating, you regain weight even quicker."

Moore adds that the diet "sets up a vicious cycle of being hungry during the restrictive three days and most likely overeating on the off days."

And the diet is so monotonous, dieters gladly return to their old eating habits. "What good is it to go back to the old habits that caused the weight gain, without resolving weight issues?" asks Moore. "Hands down, the 3 Day Diet is not conducive to changing habits or encouraging a healthier lifestyle, which are fundamental to weight control," she says.

Because the 3 Day Diet is so low in carbohydrates, it's likely the initial weight loss is primarily water weight, as carbohydrate encourages your body to retain water. As soon as the dieter goes back to consuming a normal amount of carbohydrate, the water weight comes back.

Experts worry that when dieters can't follow restrictive plans like the 3 Day Diet, they blame themselves and think they've failed.

But "fad diets are not sustainable for any period of time, and it is the reason so many people throw in the towel, feeling frustrated that diets don't work, when in reality it is the diet, not the dieter," Moore says.

Adapted from a WebMD article by Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD