

Nothing new in the diet universe

Written by By Melissa Martin Guest Columnist
Friday, 21 December 2018 04:57



I arrived at my favorite eatery for seasonal cinnamon pancakes with cream cheese frosting. Yum. As I started to enjoy the tantalizing taste on my tongue, a middle-aged couple seated at the next table blabbed on and on about weight loss and dieting. Blah. Blah. Blah. “Stop already!” I wanted to shout.

Journalist Gina Kolata penned a 2018 article for the New York Times where she surmised, “You’d think that scientists at an international conference on obesity would know by now which diet is best, and why. As it turns out, even the experts still have widely divergent opinions.”

On Nov. 14, an international scientific conference featuring world-renowned experts in the field of obesity was held in Tennessee.

The Obesity Society is the leading organization of scientists and health professionals devoted to understanding and reversing the epidemic of obesity and its adverse health, economic and societal effects.

ObesityWeek is the largest obesity-centric conference in the world, according to their website. For more information, visit www.obesity.org.

The big unanswered questions linger. Why have people become fatter in recent decades? Is it because of ever-larger portion sizes? Is it due to processed foods? Which diet is healthier for weight loss? How do people maintain weight loss? Why and how do individuals gain and lose

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weight? Is it genes? Is it sedentary lifestyle? Is it sugary foods? What part does metabolism play in how calories are burned? Is it a combination of factors?

“After decades of research, there are shockingly few firm conclusions,” declared Kolata.

Nonetheless, marketers of fad diets plaster advertisements on everything but toilet seats. Media mania merges with deceptive dieting so the only loss is the green in your wallet.

Every year, new-fangled diet crazes come along and claim outlandish promises. Consumers are scammed by buying books, videotapes, potions and powders, portioned and packaged foods, and suspicious supplements. And people take the bait—in hopes of losing weight.

Hop off the hype wagon and smell the rip-offs. Pills, powders, and patches for permanent weight loss are gimmicks. There’s no reliable scientific research to back up their dramatic claims. Beware of the pandering panacea of products. Folks, don’t be fooled. Magical, miracle, and mysterious meals and deals that burn calories like butter are bogus. So ditch dieting.

“There are no foods or pills that magically burn fat. No super foods will alter your genetic code. No products will miraculously melt fat while you watch TV or sleep. Some ingredients in supplements and herbal products can be dangerous and even deadly for some people,” proclaims Taylor Wolfram, Registered Dietician at www.eatright.org.

“Fad diets don’t help you keep off the weight in the long term. So what does work? The best diet is not a diet at all, but a way of life that includes food you enjoy, exercise, and health habits,” according to article on WebMD.

Diets such as the Atkins, South Beach, Cabbage soup, Pritikin, Hollywood diet, Dukan, Lemon detox, Ketogenic diet, Whole 30, the Paleo diet, Scarsdale diet, Macrobiotic diet, juice cleanses, raw food diet, Carnivore diet, Blood type diet and intermittent fasting are fads according to the experts. And many fad diets are unhealthy and even dangerous.

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What's the downside of Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, and Nutrisystem? You will likely gain the weight back when you stop the program due to the portion-controlled and prepackaged foods.

"People with celiac disease, gluten sensitivity or a wheat allergy should avoid gluten. But there's no evidence that avoiding gluten will help people without these conditions lose weight or have any benefit on heart health," according to researchers at www.livescience.com.

"The most successful weight loss plans combine diet, exercise and behavioral therapy. Talking to a registered dietitian nutritionist is a good first step," said Registered Dietician, Ruth Frechman at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Healthy weight loss requires long-term lifestyle changes. So, think twice before following a fad diet for your 2019 New Year's resolution.

Melissa Martin, Ph.D., is an author, columnist, educator, and therapist. She lives in Ohio. Visit: www.melissamartinchildreauthor.com

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