



## rating popular diets

*With just under 60 per cent of people either overweight or obese, it's no wonder diets are proliferating, some new, but others resurrected and revamped from the 1970s! So it's important to be informed about how good these diets are for you in the longer term, for some do more damage than good.*



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A new study has rated the most popular weight-loss diets, attempting to establish which are nutritionally sound and which are fads, and likely to lead to long-term health problems

### how diets stack up

The **Atkins Diet** and **Protein Power** allow for rapid weight loss in the short-term. The high-protein content is satiating, which helps dieters. Their drawback is that they contain the lowest amount of vegetables, fruits and grains compared to optimal health recommendations. Fruit, vegetables and nuts are the protective foods, reducing the risks of heart disease, cancer and diabetes over the long term, so you wouldn't want to reduce intake of such foods over a very long period of dieting.

These diets have the highest cholesterol and saturated-fat content. Used over a long term, they're estimated to increase cholesterol levels by as much as 25 per cent and heart disease

risk by a worrying 50 per cent.

I don't recommend these diets, as they aren't a solution to modifying bad lifestyle habits.

A somewhat better, high-protein diet would be **The Zone**, because it recommends lean meats only and the avoidance of high-fat animal products. However, most grain products, starchy vegetables and some fruits are still restricted.

**Sugar Busters!** focuses on lowering sugar intake and eating more foods with a low glycaemic index (high-fibre vegetables, fruits and wholegrains). This is sensible, and you can achieve a cholesterol-lowering effect as a bonus. But not all espoused in this diet is correct.

The **Pritikin** and **Ornish** diets rate best, in my opinion. These are based on low-fat, high-fibre, generally plant-derived foods. Long term use of the **Ornish** diet, which is vegetarian, would cut coronary heart disease risk by more than 60 per cent.

See page 30 for a recipe.

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