

Quick Guide: Diet Approaches for Weight Loss Your Dietitian Offers

1 Mediterranean Diet

Emphasises plant-based wholefoods including:

- Healthy fats: olive oil, nuts and seeds, oily fish, avocados.
- Fibre: wholegrains, fruits and vegetables.
- Plant proteins: beans, chickpeas, lentils and peas.
- Moderate seafood and poultry.
- Limited processed foods.

Pros:

- Shows strong evidence for weight loss, improving cholesterol, blood sugar control, heart and gut health.



Cons:

- Cost: fresh fish, nuts and olive oil can be expensive. Try frozen or canned products as an affordable alternative.
- Time: preparing meals from scratch can take time, so try batch cooking and saving leftovers.

3 Low Carbohydrate Diet

- Reduces carbohydrate intake and emphasises proteins and healthy fats.
- Involves eating fewer than 130g carbohydrate per day (1 slice of bread = 20g carbs). Different levels of restriction are possible, e.g. 80-100g carbs per day.

Pros:

- Can be effective for weight loss and blood sugar management, and possibly polycystic ovary syndrome.
- More sustainable than very low carb approaches for many people.

Cons:

- May not be suitable for people with diabetes taking blood glucose-lowering medication. Discuss with your GP, diabetes team or dietitian first!
- Can cause constipation in some people. Your dietitian can help with improving your fluid and fibre intake to prevent this.

2 DASH Diet (for Hypertension)

Emphasises foods rich in blood-pressure lowering potassium, calcium and magnesium including:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Wholegrains.
- Lean protein (poultry, fish, beans, nuts).
- Low fat dairy.
- Limited salt and processed foods.



Pros:

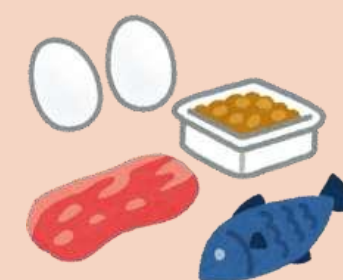
- Particularly effective for weight loss while managing high blood pressure.
- Teaches about portion sizes and nutritional values of foods.

Cons:

- Requires use of food labels and measurement of serving sizes. Your dietitian can support with this.

4 Ketogenic Diet

- Very low carbohydrate (<50g/day).
- High in fats, moderate protein.
- Emphasises foods like meat, fish, eggs, dairy, nuts, seeds, and non-starchy vegetables.



Pros:

- Encourages fat loss.
- Can improve appetite control and produce more rapid weight loss than other approaches.

Cons:

- As per the low carb diet (above) plus:
- May be challenging to maintain long-term.
- Can impair exercise performance.
- Requires careful planning, monitoring and supervision by healthcare professionals to avoid nutritional deficiencies.

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5 Intermittent Fasting

Several approaches including:

- 5:2 diet - 5 days of regular eating, 2 days of reduced calories (about 500-600 calories per day) on non-consecutive days.
- Alternate Day Fasting - alternating between regular eating days and very low calorie days.
- 24-hour fasts - fasting for 24 hours once or twice per week.
- Modified fasting - very low calorie intake on fasting days rather than complete fasting.

These can be combined with other dietary approaches.

Pros:

- Can reduce calorie intake, improve blood sugar control and cellular health as well as promoting weight loss.
- Fasting periods can be varied to allow more flexibility.

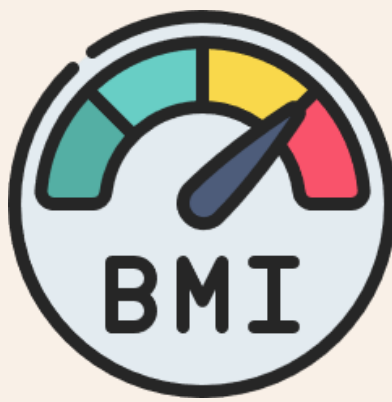
Cons:

- Important to maintain good nutrition on eating days to prevent nutritional deficiencies.
- Not suitable for everyone (e.g. pregnancy, people with certain medical conditions or medications that must be taken with food).
- Some experience hunger and irritability on fasting days.

Weight loss injections

GLP-1 injections are suitable for individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or more, or a BMI of 27 or more with weight-related health issues such as high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

They are currently only available on NHS prescription from specialist weight management services alongside lifestyle change.



6 Time Restricted Eating



A type of intermittent fasting. Involves limiting food intake to a specific window of time each day, usually 6-12 hours. For example, fasting for 18 hours from and eating within a 6 hour window.

Pros:

- Limiting eating to specific time window often reduces calorie intake and can promote weight loss.
- Fasting periods may help the body to burn fat stores for energy.
- Avoiding eating late at night may improve sleep quality.

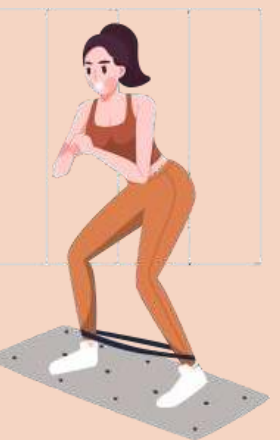
Cons:

- Risk of hunger and over-eating during non-fasting windows.
- Not suitable for everyone - speak with your GP or Dietitian first.

Other lifestyle considerations

Whichever dietary approach you choose, it's important to consider other aspects of your lifestyle to support safe and sustainable weight loss:

- Sleep: Ensure you get 7-9 hours of sleep per night.
- Stress Management: Practice mindfulness, meditation, or other stress-reducing activities that you or your family enjoy.
- Hydration: Staying hydrated is crucial. Aim for 8 glasses of water a day.
- Limit alcohol: Aim to drink no more than 14 units/week. Spread this out in the week and include alcohol-free days.
- Regular Exercise: Incorporate both aerobic and strength-training exercises.



Your dietitian can help you to find the right approach for YOU and provide practical, personalised advice. To get started, book an appointment with your PCN Dietitian.