

Starvation Diets: A fat magnet

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Starvation diets, where we go hungry, can make you gain weight in the long run. At the beginning of these radical diets we always lose weight, but soon we get stuck and the effect stops. The reason behind this is that our body adapts and gets used to this lower calorie intake; it reacts by drastically slowing down our metabolism and going into safety mode. A slow-down in the metabolism makes it more difficult for the body to burn calories. At this point we are burning fewer calories than at the beginning of the diet, thus making it more difficult for us to lose more weight.

Another negative factor is that in times of hunger our body tends to burn the easiest source of calories first. This means we will consume our own muscle mass rather than the energy stored in fat cells. This loss slows down our metabolism even more making it harder to lose fat. At that moment we get frustrated and feel that we failed with the diet and return to our original eating habits. This causes the “yo-yo effect”. Since our body needs time to adapt, it remains in safety mode, and while we start taking in more calories, they end up being stored in our fat cells. This is the reason why people gain weight after a radical diet.

So, in the long-term, it is best to lose weight slowly, avoiding the feeling of hunger so the metabolism doesn’t switch into safety mode.

With proper nutrition, you should not lose more than 1 Kg per month. Instead of going hungry it is preferable to eat healthy foods, avoiding sugars and fat, and to weight train in order to increase muscle mass and burn extra calories.