The Grapefruit Diet
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The Grapefruit Diet: What it is

The Grapefruit Diet has been around a long time - since at least the 1930s. A short-term, quick weight loss plan also known as the Hollywood Diet or the Mayo Diet (not associated with the Mayo Clinic in the US), the Grapefruit Diet surprisingly has survived the test of time, being circulated by word of mouth, online and in book form - yet no one claims ownership of the plan.

The premise of the Grapefruit Diet is based on an alleged "magical" ingredient in grapefruits, that, when eaten with protein, theoretically triggers fat burning and causes weight loss. The diet is designed to promote fast weight loss; unfortunately, the weight lost is primarily from fluids and not fat and generally returns as soon as the dieter comes off the diet.

The seeds of the Atkins Diet may have been sown by the food choices of the wacky, very low calorie, low carbohydrate, high protein Grapefruit Diet.

Most versions promise a 10 pound (4.5 kilogram) weight loss during the 12-day diet. Dieters who want more than 12 days of monotony must wait two days before starting the diet again. Exercise is recommended in some versions and absent in others. Long-term weight control is not part of the diet plan. Experts say this is not a healthy, sustainable rate of weight loss. Aiming to lose one to two pounds a week (0.5 to 1kg) is a realistic weight loss goal.

Which diet is right for you? Get the facts

The Grapefruit Diet: What you can eat

In most versions of the Grapefruit Diet a small variety of foods are required at breakfast, lunch, dinner and at bedtime. Dieters are encouraged to drink black coffee and plenty of water throughout the day.

Sample meal plan:

**Breakfast**
2 eggs, 2 slices of bacon, black coffee, 1/2 grapefruit or a glass of grapefruit juice.

**Lunch**
Salad with salad dressing, unlimited meat and 1/2 grapefruit or a glass of grapefruit juice.

**Dinner**
Red or green vegetables (except starchy ones such as peas, beans, corn, sweet potatoes) or salad, unlimited meat or fish, and 1/2 grapefruit or 227? ml grapefruit juice.

**Bedtime snack**
Glass of skimmed milk

In the Grapefruit Diet you can use all the butter and salad dressing you desire and prepare foods in any method, including fried. Grapefruit juice must be unsweetened. Any food or beverage not on the diet is
not allowed. Snacking is only permitted after dinner. Drink eight glasses of water a day. Eat all of the approved foods.

The Grapefruit Diet: How it works

This low-carbohydrate, moderate-protein diet is another low-calorie diet averaging 800 - 1,000 calories in most versions. Most people will lose weight - with or without grapefruit on the Grapefruit Diet - when calories are dramatically reduced to this level. Unfortunately, there are no explanations for how the mysterious grapefruit enzyme works and why it is only contained in grapefruit and not other citrus fruits. Experts say the diet is too low in calories for healthy sustainable weight loss. No scientific studies to date substantiate grapefruit's power to burn fat.

One small study published in 2006 and funded by the Florida Department of Citrus found that the addition of a half grapefruit or 113 g of juice with meals resulted in an average weight loss of more than three pounds (1.4 kilograms) in 12 weeks, with some participants losing 10 pounds (4.5 kg). Researchers suspect the addition of grapefruit to the otherwise healthy meals reduced insulin levels and promoted a small weight loss. Study participants also "slightly enhanced" their physical activity, which could also explain the weight loss.

While grapefruit is a very nutritious low-calorie fruit, loaded with vitamin C and fibre, it is not a mysterious fat burner. The low glycaemic index, high fibre and low calorie nature of the fruit may reduce insulin levels and help dieters feel full and eat fewer calories. Beyond that, no magic appears to be at work with the Grapefruit Diet. Experts say one small study is not enough to pin magical powers on this fruit.

The Grapefruit Diet: What the experts say

Dr Áine O'Connor a nutrition scientist with The British Nutrition Foundation told us via e-mail: "The grapefruit diet is a very low calorie, low carbohydrate, high protein diet. Initial weight loss is due to loss of the body’s carbohydrate stores and fluid losses, as well as reducing your overall calorie intake and not due to the purported ‘fat-burning’ ability of grapefruit.”

The British Dietetic Association warns people to avoid fad diets which recommend the magical fat-burning effects of foods like grapefruit and Connie Diekman, past president of the American Dietetic Association agrees. "There is no evidence that grapefruit has fat-burning enzymes nor is it a magic bullet for weight loss.”

Beyond the nutritious grapefruit, experts agree, the Grapefruit Diet has numerous pitfalls and should not be used for anyone looking for sustainable, long-term weight control. The limited variety of foods is so restrictive it does little to help dieters improve their eating habits or behaviours. It's exactly the formula that causes most dieters to throw in the towel, disgusted with trying to lose weight.

Dr O’Connor says: "In the long-term avoiding certain food groups or restricting entire food groups will lead to nutrient deficiencies. In order to lose weight you need to make changes to your lifestyle that you can maintain in the long term and that will give your body everything it needs."

Healthy weight loss is a process not a promise. “If you want long-term success, don't waste your time on the Grapefruit Diet,” says Connie Diekman.
The expert consensus seems to be pretty clear: don't bother with the Grapefruit Diet.

While nutritious grapefruit certainly can be part of a healthy weight loss plan, it contains no mysterious fat-burning properties. If you love grapefruit, reap the benefits of this super-nutritious food by enjoying a serving before meals. The addition of a half grapefruit or a glass of grapefruit juice before meals may help fill you up so you'll eat fewer calories at meals, potentially losing weight. For added nutrition, choose pink grapefruit, which is richer in beta-carotene.

Along with a well-balanced, sensible, calorie-controlled diet, don't forget to include a regular dose of physical activity -- a scientifically proven way to burn fat and lose weight. A claim the Grapefruit Diet just can't make.

It's also worth noting that grapefruit juice can directly or indirectly interact in important ways with a number of medications.

Grapefruit juice contains chemicals that can cause problems with enzymes that break down certain types of medicines in your intestines. When a medicine does not get broken down properly you can end up with too much, or too little, medicine in your blood.

http://www.webmd.boots.com/diet/features/the-grapefruit-diet