

Weighty information for dieting

By WILLETTE RUDE
For the Emerald

Health should be considered in loss

ity choices to retain the loss.

Records show three-fourths of the student health concerns in the University nutritionist's office are directly or indirectly related to weight control or dieting.

Information about the safety or nutritional adequacy of the most popularly advertised diets are among the most frequent needs of students who want to get rid of their "excess baggage" and stay healthy. This need for instant results is often responsible for the less-than-sound dieting choices.

A safe rate of weight loss is usually two to three pounds per week with slightly more expected in the initial stages. Although the end result of extreme weight control measures will be the weight loss you desire, the loss is of water from body tissue and depletion of your protein (muscle) stores as well as the target fatty tissue.

The body does have storage capabilities for some nutrients, but a daily replenishing of protein, vitamins (B and C especially) and minerals as well as fiber and water is necessary to replace daily loss.

Regardless of their source, about 500 to 750 calories are needed as "protein sparing" calories (calories which will provide enough energy fuel for the brain and vital functions to continue) so muscle stores and other protein tissues are not metabolized for energy purposes.

In the absence of calories for energy, the protein is broken down and changed to fuel instead of being used for tissue repair and maintenance as intended. The body tissue prefers using carbohydrate for energy over fat and protein sources, but the quantity of carbohydrate stores of the body are only a few hundred grams (maybe two beers and three slices of pizza's worth) which can supply the energy required for body functions for perhaps half a day.

Therefore, except for the first few hours of starvation, the major effects are progressive depletion of the body's own tissue, both protein and fat.

In addition, the body requires a certain amount of bulk to keep muscle tone and digestive functions active in the gastrointestinal tract. Fasting or liquid diets are quite an adjustment after normal eating, and over-eating patterns



and severe compensation reactions (including heart attack) are reported to be associated with the liquid protein regimens. Vitamin deficiencies may result in addition, especially if tissue stores were depleted before the severe restrictions.

Chances are that most weight-conscious students have attempted to keep a few snack foods and occasional beers (alcohol supplying no nutritional value but plenty of calories) in the diet to keep it tolerable while still holding down calories. The resulting percentage of the already minimal intake of food is nutritionally inadequate but psychologically satisfying.

The attraction of a fast has the favorable mental component of having overcome the compulsion to eat and this sense of power and discipline can feel tremendous to someone whose mind has been demanding to be fed constantly.

During the fast, your mind may not need to be fed, but your body still continues to be dependent on the same daily quota of protein, vitamins and minerals as 24 hours

earlier. Your body's own stores will be depleted to supply the deficit.

With any dieting practice, it is wise to keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Diet under the supervision of a doctor or nutritionist.

- Consider the effects of any medications or drugs (including caffeine and alcohol) being taken while on restrictive food intake.

- Analyze your food intake by identifying the times, places, social conditions and frequency of your eating patterns. Share this record with the doctor or nutritionist to locate improper food choices and life-style patterns.

- Inquire about water, fruit juice and vitamin supplementation to your doctor while on restrictive food intakes.

- Try keeping a record of all the snack and high calorie foods you "could have eaten when offered or available...but REFUSED."

This practice can be as effective as fasting mentally in achieving a sense of control and power over curbing food compulsions. A sav-

ings of 3,500 calories represents one pound of fat you could have gained!

- Question seriously your intentions and commitment in losing weight. Realize that it takes a permanent change in eating patterns and often life style and activ-

- Consider exercise as a method of weight control.

Individual nutritional counseling as well as a bibliography and list of recommended texts for further information on weight control and reducing diets is available at the Student Health Center. For further information or appointments, call: 686-4441.



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