At a young age, food became a center of focus in my life. Growing up in a society that hammers the image of a thin physique into the minds of young girls was very difficult. My teenage years consisted of periods of starving, then binge eating. As my twenties approached, my eating habits stabilized and I came to a realization. Inconsistent eating patterns are not the answer. This is why I believe strict diets do not work. I believe strict diets are an ineffective weight loss tool because they lead to sporadic eating patterns, they cause an unhealthy relationship with food and they don’t keep unwanted weight off permanently.

Strict diets limit what a person can and cannot eat. Some of these rigid regimes restrict many energy-rich foods. The person is left tired, starving and unsatisfied. This starvation can lead to sporadic eating. The person becomes so deprived of food that eventually they gorge on foods high in fats and carbs that their body desperately needs. This high food intake can lead to feelings of guilt, and the vicious cycle of starving and binging continues. As this cycle progresses the once healthy bond one had with food begins to deteriorate.

Depriving oneself during a strict diet can ultimately lead to an unhealthy relationship with food. The person will label certain foods such as bread and other carb-rich snacks as “bad foods” and refuse to eat them. The association the person makes with “good foods” and “bad foods” can lead to years of battling with food issues.

The ultimate reason why I believe strict diets are not the answer to weight loss is because they do not keep the weight off. Strict diets are a temporary weight loss solution. In the end the person will put back on the weight they lost or even more. Our bodies need nourishment that is not provided in a strict diet. Eventually the body can’t handle the restriction anymore and in order to satisfy ourselves we eat more than enough.

I firmly believe that strict diets are an ineffective answer to long-term weight loss. Restricting foods leads to sporadic eating patterns, an unhealthy relationship with food and does not keep unwanted weight off permanently. Eating nutritious foods, eating when you are hungry and eating certain foods in moderation while getting enough exercise are the keys to healthy, long-term weight loss.

By Chelsey Leonard