



# Why Fad Diets Fail

*And what to do instead of chasing the next quick fix*

Every year brings a new miracle diet. They promise fast results by cutting whole food groups or following strict rules, but the weight almost always comes back. Here is why they fail, and what actually works instead.

## What makes a diet a "fad"

A fad diet promises rapid results without solid evidence, often through very restrictive eating, unusual food combinations, or expensive products and supplements. It offers a short-term fix for a long-term problem. There is no magic diet.

## Why they backfire

- After early water loss, every diet only loses fat in proportion to the calorie deficit. The label does not matter.
- They are hard to sustain, so most people stop and rebound.
- Restriction makes the body fight back: slower metabolism, more hunger (ghrelin), less fullness (leptin).
- They can cause fatigue, muscle loss, nutrient gaps, and a preoccupation with food.

*The diet cycle is the real problem. Lose fast, rebound, repeat. Yo-yo dieting is linked with heart strain, muscle loss and gut changes, and it chips away at your confidence.*

## The hormones behind the rebound

When you under-eat for too long, your hormones shift against you. Ghrelin (hunger) rises and leptin (fullness) falls, so you feel hungrier and less satisfied. Chronic stress raises cortisol, which encourages fat storage and emotional eating. These are normal survival responses, not a lack of willpower.

## What works instead

- Aim for slow, steady change you can keep, around 0.5 to 1 kg a week.
- Build balanced meals, higher in protein and fibre, that keep you full.
- Move more day to day, and lean on habits rather than strict rules.
- Allow treats in moderation. Consistency beats perfection.

**Where to learn more:** NHS Better Health, the British Dietetic Association (BDA), and the British Nutrition Foundation. See the companion Sustainable Weight Loss leaflet. If weight is hard to shift despite consistent effort, please speak to your GP.

*This leaflet is general nutritional guidance for education only. It is not medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, and it does not replace advice from your GP or a registered dietitian. Always check with a qualified professional before making significant changes, particularly if you have a health condition, are pregnant, or take medication.*

**Ready to take the next step?** Book a free call or start your food diary analysis at [performancenutritionlondon.co.uk](https://performancenutritionlondon.co.uk)