

Does the 'Twinkie diet' send a bad message?

Nutrition professor **Mark Haub** ate junk food, including Twinkies, for 10 weeks — and lost 27 pounds. He did it through calorie counting to prove it's not what you eat, but how much, that determines weight loss.



He's cautioned others not to adopt his experiment as a diet, but some worry that his stunt will inspire unhealthy eating. The experts weigh in, below.

It definitely does

This diet — if you want to call it that — sends a dangerous message. I am particularly worried about still-growing teens who might try it because it sounds "cool." Losing weight is not just about calories. It is about choosing healthy foods which are rich in nutrients including fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Twinkies contain sugar and unhealthy fat, as do other junk foods. So if that's all you eat, you're sending your body into shock. If you want to lose weight and keep it off, you have to learn how to eat healthy. This kind of short-term fad isn't the answer.

— Lisa Young, Ph.D., RD and author of *The Portion Teller Plan*

Only if the message gets twisted

People want to hear what they can eat, not what they can't. So the wrong message probably is coming across, but that's because it's been twisted by the media.

It's not like Mark Haub ate an unlimited junk food diet. He had seven Doritos at a time, not a whole bag. If everyone could limit their portions of junk food, we wouldn't have an obesity epidemic. If people could take the message to be, "Everything can fit into your diet within limits," his experiment is a success. If they take it to mean, "The sky's the limit," it's not.

— Bonnie Taub-Dix, MA, RD, CDN and author of *Read It Before You Eat It*

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