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No-Grain Diet

The No-Grain Diet was created by Joseph Mercola, DO, in hopes of encouraging people to reduce and eliminate food addictions and lose weight. The diet is based on the notion that grains and refined carbohydrates spike blood sugar levels and lead to excessive hunger, thus contributing to weight gain. His approach is similar to the Atkins Diet with an elimination, and ultimately, reduction of grains. It differs in that The No-Grain Diet distinguishes between “good” and “bad” carbohydrates. “Good” carbohydrates include organic whole grains while “bad” carbohydrates include those that are highly processed such as white rice and pasta.

Dr. Mercola believes that too many “bad” carbohydrates will suppress the immune system and contribute to allergies, digestive disorders, depression, fatigue, bloating, and high blood pressure. The No-Grain Diet stresses the importance of the quality of carbohydrates consumed and encourages organic food choices whenever possible. In order to preserve the nutritional value of food, the use of microwaves is discouraged. The diet is divided into three phases and may be continued for extended periods of time.

The first phase of the diet lasts three days and requires dieters to eliminate all grains, fruit, starchy vegetables, and sweets. It's important to eat every two hours during this phase to maintain steady blood sugar levels and reduce cravings and subsequent binges.

The second phase of the diet also restricts grains and starchy foods, but the structure of the program changes. Instead of eating every two hours, three meals and three snacks are consumed each day. During this phase, participants are encouraged to exercise five days a week. This phase should last until the desired weight is reached and maintained for four weeks and may last up to another two weeks.

The objective of the third phase is to sustain weight loss. “Good” carbohydrates are gradually incorporated back into the diet along with fruit, some starchy vegetables, and honey. During this phase, it's particularly important to monitor weight, take note of any fluctuations, and adjust one's diet accordingly.

A form of acupressure, known as the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), may also be combined with this diet to address the emotional and psychological reasons for food addiction.

Foods to include during phases 1 and 2:

- Low-starch vegetables
- Protein
- Dairy
- Nuts
- Seeds

Foods to avoid during phases 1 and 2:

- Fruit
- Starchy vegetables
- All grains
- Sweets

Foods to include during phase 3:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Whole grains
- Protein
- Dairy
- Nuts
- Seeds

Foods to avoid during phase 3:

- Processed foods

- Refined grains
- Sugary foods

Pros:

- Encourages consumption of whole, organic foods
- Distinguishes between whole grains and refined carbohydrates
- Addresses psychological factors associated with weight gain

Cons:

- Extremely restrictive in first two phases
- May not be suitable for vegetarians or individuals not trying to lose weight

Sources:

The No-Grain Diet www.nograindiet.com (http://www.nograindiet.com)

Grain Free Living www.grainfreeliving.com (http://www.grainfreeliving.com)