

# WEIGHT LOSS DIETS 101: four techniques to follow

ARIFF AHMED

Over the last decade, people in Bangladesh and all over the world have become more health-conscious. Our minds have finally woken up to the unhealthy side effect of inadequate exercise and not watching our food intake. To counter this, a movement towards healthy eating and exercise has risen, leading to a resurgence of specially designed diets to cut down our belly fats. It is not only a matter of being fit, eating healthy also leads to increased stamina and an increase in productivity in our professional lives. Out of the myriad of diets that have popped up these days, here are four that are very popular.

## KETO

Keto or ketogenic diet has been the clear winner in the 'diet wars'. Originally designed to treat epilepsy in children, it reduces weight by forcing the body to burn fats rather than carbohydrates. Keto is a low carbohydrate and high fat with an adequate protein diet. Usually, the body receives glucose from carbohydrates which give us energy. By eliminating carbohydrates, the body is forced to break down fat and protein for energy, which causes weight loss. Keto diet can have short-term adverse side effects such as constipation and malnutrition to long term ones which may cause kidney and heart damage. Ruslan Hossain, who runs Ruslan's Studio, attributed keto's success to the fact that it is easier to prepare. Keto usually consists of eating lots of meat and eggs along with cheese and butter. It avoids fruits, vegetables and grains.

## PLANT-BASED DIETS

Certain communities have practised a diet based only on plants for a long time. It involves eliminating all kinds of meat, poultry and fish. Some versions extend further by avoiding all types of animal products such as dairy and eggs. Plant-based diets help reduce weight because the rich fibre food makes us feel fuller. Plants are also low in high-calorie fat. Plant-based diets are also beneficial for

people suffering from heart disease, cancer and diabetes. However, people who practice these diets might lose out on important nutrients that are usually derived from animals.

## INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent fasting is the common term for a group of diets where fasting is practised for a certain number of hours per day. During this period, the body is deprived of food and water. Some people practice a form where a little food and water is consumed. The weight loss effects of intermittent fasting have not been scientifically proven. However, people practising intermittent fasting have said that they feel lighter, more energetic and productive after regularly following the diet plan. According to nutritionist and fitness consultant Ruslan Hossain, "Intermittent fasting reduces blood level insulin" and is thus great for diabetes patients. Popular forms include the 16/8 method, where food can be consumed only in eight-to-ten-hour windows, and alternate-day fasting, where the fast lasts for 24 hours on alternate days.

## MEDITERRANEAN DIET

This diet is based on eating food that people in Italy and Greece used to eat. It consists of eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, seafood and extra virgin olive oil. Processed meat, food with added sugar, refined grains and oils are avoided. Dairy items are taken in moderation. It was initially designed to lower heart disease risk, but it also aids in fat reduction. The emphasis on olive oil can be cumbersome to those not used to the taste.

