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## ***Why So Many Different Diets Can Help People Lose Weight— And Keep It Off***

### **Why So Many Diets Can Work**

Despite wildly different rules—vegan vs. carnivore, keto vs. Ornish, paleo vs. Mediterranean—many diets succeed because they drive the same underlying mechanisms that support weight loss and metabolic improvement. People often focus on the differences among diets. Physiologically, what matters most are their shared principles. Even when calories aren't explicitly counted, eating patterns shift in a way that lowers average caloric intake.

### **The Core Mechanisms They Share**

#### **They Create a Sustainable Caloric Reduction (Directly or Indirectly)**

Different diets achieve this through different routes:

- High-protein diets reduce appetite and increase satiety.
- High-fiber diets (vegan, vegetarian, Mediterranean, DASH) slow gastric emptying and reduce overeating.
- Low-carb diets (keto, Atkins) reduce insulin and naturally limit food choices—often lowering intake unintentionally.
- Highly structured diets reduce impulsive eating by restricting options.
- Plant-heavy diets tend to have low caloric density, allowing bigger meals for fewer calories.

## **They Reduce Ultra-Processed, Hyperpalatable Foods**

Every effective diet eliminates or drastically reduces:

- Ultra-processed foods
- Added sugars
- Toxic obesogenic additives/chemicals
- Refined grains
- Fried foods
- Snack foods
- Fast food
- Sugary beverages

These banned foods drive overeating because they:

- Bypass natural satiety signals
- Combine high fat + high sugar (“bliss point”)
- Are calorically dense and nutritionally sparse

Removing them—regardless of diet ideology—leads to fewer calories consumed.

## **They Increase Nutrient-Dense “Whole” Foods**

Nearly all successful diets emphasize:

- Whole fresh vegetables
- Whole fresh fruits
- Unprocessed animal proteins or plant proteins
- Whole unrefined grains OR tubers (depending on the plan)
- Healthy fats and oils

These foods improve:

- Satiety
- Micronutrient status
- Gut health
- Metabolic markers (glucose, lipids, blood pressure)

They also make overeating harder.

## **They Provide Structure, Rules, and Constraints**

Behaviorally, constraints reduce decision fatigue and mindless eating. Examples:

- Keto dramatically lowers carbohydrate-based foods.
- Veganism removes all animal-derived foods.
- Paleo removes processed and agricultural-era foods.
- Mediterranean encourages specific staples (olive oil, fish, legumes).

When options shrink, overeating opportunities shrink too. This is behavioral psychology, not biochemistry.

### **They Increase Consciousness About Eating**

Most diets require you to:

- Read labels
- Plan meals
- Cook more
- Track something (carbs, points, macros, portions)
- Eat on a schedule

This increased awareness reduces spontaneous eating and “calorie leakage.” Awareness = More control.

### **They Encourage Consistency and Long-Term Habits**

People who succeed on ANY diet share some traits:

- Regular meal patterns
- Routine grocery habits
- Reduced or eliminated snacking
- Reduced emotional eating
- Social accountability (community, books, apps, coaching)
- Periodic monitoring (weight, food logs, biomarkers)

It’s the habits that create long-term maintenance—not the ideology of the diet.

### **They Align With the Person’s Preferences**

A diet only works if a person can live on it. Different diets succeed for different people because:

- A vegan may feel great on plants.
- A carnivore may find it easiest to avoid carbs.
- A keto dieter may enjoy fatty foods.
- A Mediterranean eater may love olive oil and vegetables.

The “best” diet is the one a person doesn’t abandon.

### **So, What Do All Effective Diets Have in Common?**

Here’s the condensed list. In general:

Fewer calories eaten than burned (sustained slight deficit). Reduced ultra-processed foods. Increased whole, minimally processed foods. More protein and fiber (relative to baseline), enhancing satiety. Clear rules that reduce decision fatigue. Greater mindfulness around eating. Consistency and habit formation. A personal fit that allows long-term adherence. These

shared fundamentals matter far more than the macronutrient distribution or ideology of the diet.

### **The Bottom Line**

All effective diets—no matter how contradictory they appear—work because they change behavior and physiology in predictable, overlapping ways. The human body responds well to:

- Eating real food
- Avoiding hyper-processed food
- Removing toxic or obesogenic inputs
- Consistent patterns
- Moderate caloric intake
- Increased satiety
- Alignment with personal preference

These common principles drive success—not necessarily the dietary philosophy.