

## Ask the Expert: What Are Fad Diets?

Written by Daph Boulac, Psychological Sciences and Law & Society at Purdue University '27

If you've been active on social media any time in the past five years, you have probably seen commercials for a fad diet. What is a fad diet? A fad diet is a diet that says that it will make you lose weight quickly, but has little to no scientific evidence to show that is true. Fad diets will often include advice to cut certain groups of foods from your diet, will not include physical activity, and will not be balanced. Cutting out many foods has been found to lead to a cycle of losing weight, then gaining the weight back. A good way to decide if a diet is a fad diet is to look for these signs below:

### Are there "good" foods and "bad" foods?

- Many fad diets will promote certain types of foods as being better than others, or special, when science shows that a large variety of foods are important to health. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans is a science based diet that encourages all of the food groups and a large variety of foods.

### Does the diet say it will be a "quick fix?"

- Losing weight takes a long time, and the first weight to be lost is typically, muscle weight and water weight. Water weight may be gained back quickly after going off of the diet.

### Are fad diet claims based on science?

- Many fad diets will say that they are based on science, but they may just pick one study and not draw from all the studies that have tested the best diet for health. Look at the sources a diet is based on, are they reliable? The Dietary Guidelines for Americans is based on an ongoing review of all of the peer-reviewed published studies on nutrition and is a reliable and science based diet for living a long healthy life.

### Are the claims too good to be true?

- If the claims a diet are making sound too good to be true, they probably are. A healthful diet should allow you to eat a wide variety of foods that come from all of the 5 main food groups, vegetables, fruits, grains, protein foods, and low-fat dairy. It is also important to avoid saturated fats, added sugars, and sodium. If you have any questions on what a healthy diet should look like, or just want a good source to learn more, MyPlate is a great place to learn more about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, check it out at: [myplate.gov](https://myplate.gov).



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## Food Safety: Allergen-Friendly Food Safety

Written by Yaxuan Wang, Nutrition and Dietetics, Fitness and Health at Purdue University '27

As of 2021, 20 million people in the United States have food allergies, including 16 million adults and 4 million children. Keeping food safe for people who have food allergies is important to prevent allergic reactions, which can be life-threatening. For people with food allergies, even small amounts of an allergen can trigger a severe reaction. Whether you are preparing meals for a family member or hosting friends, creating an allergen-safe mealtime should always be a priority. Follow these tips to make sure that you are following allergen friendly food safety practices when you are cooking at home:

- Make sure to clean counters, cutting boards, knives, and other food preparation tools before making a meal for someone with food allergies
- Keep separate sets of silverware and utensils for handling “safe” and “unsafe” foods
- Rinse and sanitize kitchen surfaces before cooking
- Wash your hands properly before handling food.
- Prepare “safe” meals for family members with allergens before preparing meals for other family members.
- Serve allergen-friendly foods separately and cover before serving



Source: <https://aafa.org/asthma-allergy-research/allergy-capitals/>, [http://www6.allergy.org/lander?template=ARROW\\_3&tdfs=0&s\\_token=1732775646.0202280000&uid=1732775646.0202280000&term=Allergy%20Treatment&term=Allergy%20Medicine&term=Allergy%20Test%20Kits&searchbox=0&showDomain=1&backfill=0](http://www6.allergy.org/lander?template=ARROW_3&tdfs=0&s_token=1732775646.0202280000&uid=1732775646.0202280000&term=Allergy%20Treatment&term=Allergy%20Medicine&term=Allergy%20Test%20Kits&searchbox=0&showDomain=1&backfill=0)

## Pumpkin Pancakes

### Directions

1. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, pumpkin pie spice, and salt.
2. In another bowl, mix together the egg, pumpkin, milk, and vegetable oil.
3. Add the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients. If the batter is too lumpy, add more milk.
4. On medium heat, use 1/4 cup measure to add the pancake batter onto a skillet coated with vegetable oil.
5. Cook until bubbles rise on the batter surface, and flip. Cooking 1-1/2 minutes per side. Enjoy!

### Ingredients (12 servings)

- 2 cups flour
- 6 tsp brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 1/4 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 egg\*
- 1/2 cup pumpkin (canned)\*
- 1 3/4 cups milk, low-fat\*
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil\*



### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 130  
Protein: 4g  
Carbs: 21g  
Fat: 3g

**\*foods included in the  
TEFAP (The Emergency  
Food Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/perfect-pumpkin-pancakes>

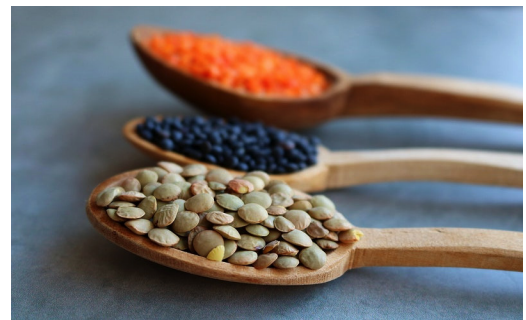
## Eating Right:

### How Can You Include More Fiber In Your Daily Diet?

Written by Abigail Rosborough, Biomedical Health Sciences Student at Purdue University '26

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that is important for a balanced diet. Fiber is important for digestive health, it helps prevent type 2 diabetes, and reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases like heart attack and stroke. There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. They both play an important role in digestion and overall health. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and forms a type of “gel” substance. It helps keep healthy blood sugar levels by slowing how sugar is absorbed in the bloodstream. Soluble fibers can be found in oats, beans, and apples. Insoluble fiber has other unique benefits in supporting digestive health. Insoluble fibers do not dissolve in water. They remain whole as they move through the digestive tract, which adds weight to stool. This added weight is important for movement through the digestive tract. Insoluble fibers can be found in brown rice, nuts, green beans, and cauliflower. Because both fiber types have a lot of benefits, it is important to eat a variety of foods that have both insoluble and soluble fiber types. Here are some tips for increasing daily fiber intake:

- Replace white rice with brown rice.
- Choose whole grain cereals for breakfast.
- Add more fruits to your meals, for example, add berries or apples to your yogurt or cereal.
- Try to include fruits or vegetables in every meal.
- Replace salty snack foods with fruits, vegetables, or whole-grain snacks.



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Sources:

<https://www.eatright.org/health/essential-nutrients/carbohydrates/easy-ways-to-boost-fiber-in-your-daily-diet> <https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/carbohydrates/fiber/#:~:text=Fiber%20helps%20regulate%20the%20body's,vegetables%2C%20legumes%2C%20and%20nuts.>



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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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IN THE NEWS

## In The News: November was Native American Heritage Month!

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics'26

November marked Native American heritage month! As Thanksgiving comes to an end, it is an important time to reflect, uplift, and thank our nation's indigenous people and the many ways that they have added to our culture today. One of the most important ways that Native Americans have shaped our culture is through food. Native Americans grew foods like potatoes, beans, corn, peanuts, pumpkins, tomatoes, squash, peppers, melons, and sunflower seeds. These foods were harvested and preserved by indigenous people, and play an important role in Native American culture. Thanks to Native American practices, Americans have adopted their farming and cultivating practices into our food systems.

Unfortunately, 2% of the U.S. population or 7 million Native Americans suffer from food insecurity. This means one in every four Native Americans are food insecure and this group has one of the highest rates of food insecurity compared with other groups in the U.S. According to the United States Department of the Interior Indian Affairs, food sovereignty can be described as "the ability of communities to determine the quantity and quality of the food that one group consumes by controlling how their food is produced and distributed". Tribal food sovereignty is an important goal to help address food insecurity and preserve food practices among Native Americans tribes and nations.

