



Pictures: Freeimages.com

Don't replace meals with booze in a diet

A diet fad known as alcorexia or drunkorexia occurs when people who want to slim down skip their meals for alcohol.

It is quick and easy to use a calorie counter to compare food with alcohol and make the necessary trade-offs.

Counting calories as a means of weight loss has become a part of everyday life for many people, especially with the advent of cellphone apps, technology and improved food labelling. By simply searching for the food or specific product a person wants to eat and seeing the potential calorie intake, people can base their nutritional decisions on this information.

The major risk factor being that alcohol intake is at the cost of nutrient intake, which can detrimentally affect overall health and nutritional status. The other risk factor could be alcoholism, as a person who wants to lose weight should rather reduce the amount of alcohol consumed for the period of the diet and not be so dependent they feel forced to give up food.

CEO for the Industry Association for Responsible Alcohol Use Dr Osborn Mahanjana explains that if people want to lose weight they should consume alcohol less

10ml

A unit of pure alcohol



...if you find you cannot reduce your alcohol intake or drink less frequently for a short period of time then there may be an underlying factor of addiction that should be addressed

Dr Osborn Mahanjana
CEO for the Industry Association for Responsible Alcohol Use

frequently. "When trying to lose weight it is better to drink less, as this can assist weight loss," says Mahanjana. "However, if you find you cannot reduce your alcohol intake or drink less frequently for a short period of time then there may be an underlying factor of addiction that should be addressed."

Meanwhile, Megan Pentz-Kluyts, a registered nutrition and dietetics consultant with a master's degree in nutrition, agrees alcohol intake plays a role when people are trying to lose weight. Pentz-Kluyts says: "A basic guideline for weight loss would be to cut calories or kilojoules by 500 or 2 000 per day, respectively. Typically, this could constitute a weight loss of around half a kilogram per week. It can be even more advantageous if one increases physical activity."

In terms of recommended drinking guidelines, women should not exceed 2-3 units of alcohol a day. A unit is 10ml of pure alcohol. It takes about 1 hour to process one unit of alcohol (but length of time differs depending on height, weight and gender)

Pentz-Kluyts says while there are no specific guidelines indicating alcohol should be excluded entirely while trying to lose weight, it does contain energy and consuming it regularly or in large quantities can affect weight and weight loss.

Dr Mahanjana advises that alcohol should be consumed in moderation and never be used as a stand-in for food.

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Misconceptions around obesity

HUNGER GAMES: OBESITY IS THE RESULT OF BIOCHEMICAL IMBALANCES IN THE BRAIN

» **Pharmacist offers holistic and individually based weight loss solutions.**

Genevieve Vieira

Obesity is a global epidemic – more than half a billion adults are obese, while in 2010 nearly 43 million children under the age of five were found to be overweight.

In South Africa 61% of the population is overweight, obese or morbidly obese.

These are staggering statistics and the seriousness is compounded by the life-threatening risks associated with being overweight, including heart disease, strokes, diabetes and cancer.

Still, there's more to excessive fat accumulation than meets the eye. According to local pharmacist and owner of the Eden Life



OBESITY. Over-eating is a global epidemic. Pictures: Thinkstock

Wellness Clinic, Paula Galvão, obesity is a result of biochemical imbalances in the brain.

She says: "Fat people are often criticised for their lack of willpower, but that is nonsense. Biochemical imbalances are the problem and you need to correct them. Until you do, no eating plan will help."

Due to the lack of knowledge, society is not sympathetic towards overweight people and this is where the misunderstanding occurs. Much like misconceptions around depression,

61%

of the South African population is overweight

people cannot just snap out of it or eat less and lose weight. If so, every overweight or obese individual would be able to drop weight with ease.

Galvão explains: "The underlying problem is the one-size-fits-all mentality of diets and eating plans, because no two people are the same. Biochemical imbalances can be caused by a number of factors, such as nutritional deficiency, genetics, stress and hormonal problems.

As we age our hormones become unbalanced and this is why we pick up weight. In women the oestrogen to progesterone ratio is very important. High levels of stress cause progesterone to convert to oestrogen, causing fat accumulation on the hips and in the stomach area. It is also interesting to note that a high body fat percentage in men causes testosterone to convert to

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Paula Galvão
Pharmacist and owner of the Eden Life Wellness Clinic



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