

Slow and Steady Loses the Weight

Reverse dieting is catching on for good reason. It allows you to gradually eat more and drop the pounds.

By BINDU GOPAL RAO

Dieting and weight maintenance are not always friends. Reverse dieting could be an ideal strategy to keep away the weight you've lost. Sarabjeet Panth, 38, who works at a BPO in Gurugram, had lost eight kilos during the lockdown, staying at home. But by the first unlock, he relapsed into binge eating. "This happened because, all this while I had stayed away from several types of foods to keep up with my diet plan. It was very restrictive and I would often crave my favourite foods, especially sweet. Then my gym coach told me about reverse dieting. In the last one month since I've been on it, I've not put on weight and feel in control of my eating," says Panth.

Reverse dieting is not a crash programme. It involves a gradual approach to increasing caloric intake, thereby boosting metabolism steadily and preventing you from succumbing to cravings. It allows you to eat more and still lose weight, which traditional diets don't always achieve. "You can get on it once your 'dieting period' is over, since it's more of a lifestyle change than a diet, per se," says Panth.

Following the process is simple too. The aim is to bring your metabolism to an optimum level, which will slow down weight gain, according to Shabana Parveen, Clinical Nutritionist, Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram. "The gradual increase in nutrition and calories allows the body to adapt to calorific changes better, which is why reverse dieting has shown to be effective for many. You require an eating plan,



which your dietician will share. Typically, 30-100 calories are increased per week. There are some calorie restrictions but your body soon gets used to the new normal," explains Parveen. Her advice is to follow reverse dieting for seven to 10 weeks at least.

This particular diet is known to increase energy levels and help break the vicious chain of weight loss-weight gain cycle. It also helps to normalise hormone levels. "To achieve the best results, start with the basal metabolic rate, which is the minimum amount of calories required for basic bodily functions while resting, in addition to supplementing it with exercise and activity. Soon, you'll notice your muscle build-up, fat reduction and better sleep," says Vaibhav Garg, Clinical and Sports Nutritionist and Founder, Purecise, a

nutrition and natural supplementation brand.

The most common drawback of reverse dieting is that people don't seek professional guidance. As a result, they report gastrointestinal distress, shares V Krishna Deepika, Dietician, Apollo Specialty Hospitals, Kondapur, Hyderabad. "Losing weight in itself is a challenge. This diet plan can only help you if you do it correctly. It's not only about how much you eat but also about what you eat," she says.

This means replacing carbs with protein and processed foods with whole foods, says Deepika. "You'll finally reach a point where the calories you're consuming will be just right for you and won't fluctuate," she says.

Reverse seems the best way to go forward while dieting.

ON REVERSE DIET, YOU NEED TO...

- Focus on food quality and meal balance
- Eat on time
- First, add proteins and then carbs back into your diet
- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables
- Make an eating schedule
- Eat more home-cooked meals
- Discourage long periods of not eating
- Implement mindful eating by learning how to differentiate mind hunger and body hunger
- Stay active



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"The gradual increase in nutrition and calories allows the body to adapt to the change better, which is why reverse dieting is useful. But you require a proper eating plan." **SHABANA PARVEEN**, Clinical Nutritionist, Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram