

Q. Can diet supplements help me lose weight?

A. The simple answer: Probably not. There's no magic pill, weight-loss supplement or potion that can make excess pounds melt away.

If losing weight is on your list of goals for the New Year, you're not alone. Lose weight. An estimated 73 percent of adults in the United States are overweight or obese.¹

The Truth About Weight Loss Supplements

If you're looking for a quick fix to lose weight, you might think taking a diet pill or supplement is all you need.

A lot of people do. In the U.S., an estimated 34 percent of adults have tried some type of weight-loss supplement. Americans spend about \$2.1 billion a year on weight-loss supplements in the form of tablets, capsules, softgels, and drinks.²

Most are made with ingredients that *could* improve metabolism or suppress appetite like:

- Green tea extract
- Chitosan
- Guar gum
- Conjugated linoleic acid
- Caffeine

However, a recent study found that diet and weight-loss supplements typically fail to help people lose weight.³



Researchers looked at 315 weight-loss studies that put different supplements to the test. They found that most did not result in weight loss. And only a few tipped the scale in the right direction by just a few pounds or less.

6 Lifestyle Habits for Healthy Weight Loss

Weight loss does not come in pill or powder form. It's a lifelong process. If you want to lose weight, skip the diet supplements, save your money, and adopt these 6 lifestyle habits to lose weight and keep it off:

- 1. Eat healthy foods** like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and fish. Avoid or limit sugary drinks, snacks, desserts, and candy high in calories.
- 2. Be active.** Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days.
- 3. Drink more water** instead of soda, juice, energy drinks, or other sugary beverages.
- 4. Practice portion control** by counting calories, keeping a food journal, and being mindful of your food choices.

ASK THE *Wellness* DOCTOR

5. Get your Zzzs. Aim for 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Why? Lack of sleep alters levels of hormones (ghrelin and leptin) linked to hunger and cravings. And if you stay up late, you'll have more time for snacking.

6. Don't give up. If you miss a workout or overeat, it's not that big of a deal. Don't use that as an excuse to overeat or skip workouts. Instead, just get back on track and keep going.

If you need extra help to lose weight, talk to your doctor, join a weight-loss group for support, or work with a trainer and dietitian to help you develop a diet and exercise plan to help you get results.

References

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2. National Institutes of Health. (2021). Dietary supplements for weight loss. NIH Office of Dietary Supplements. From: <https://tinyurl.com/3ssmhkhs>
3. Batsis, J., et al. (2021). A systematic review of dietary supplements and alternative therapies for weight loss. *Obesity*, 29(7): 1102-1113. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yr9jr29y>