

Choosing the best weight loss programme.

Choosing a weight loss program may be a daunting task. You may not know what to look for in a weight-loss program or what questions to ask. This information can help you make an informed decision about joining a program.

A Responsible and Safe Weight-loss Program.

Experts agree that the best way to reach a healthy weight is to follow a sensible eating plan and engage in regular physical activity. Weight loss programs should encourage healthy behaviors that help you lose weight and that you can maintain over time. A safe and effective weight loss program should include:

1. Healthy eating plans that reduce calories but do not rule out specific foods or food groups
2. Regular physical activity and/or exercise instruction
3. Tips on healthy behavior changes that also consider your cultural needs
4. Slow and steady weight loss of about ½ to 2 pounds per week and not more than 3 pounds per week (weight loss may be faster at the start of a program)
5. A plan to keep the weight off after you have lost it.

Ask Questions

Gather as much information as you can before deciding to join a program. Providers of weight-loss programs should be able to answer these questions:

1. What does the weight loss program consist of?
2. What are the staff qualifications?
3. Does the product or program carry any risks?
4. How much does the program cost?
5. What results do participants typically have?

What does the weight loss program consist of?

1. Does the program offer individual counseling and/or group classes?
2. Do you have to follow a specific meal plan or keep food records?
3. Do you have to purchase special food, drugs, or supplements?
4. Does the program encourage you to be physically active, follow a specific physical activity plan, or provide exercise instruction?
5. Does the program provide information on how to make positive and healthy behavior changes?
6. Is the program sensitive to your lifestyle and cultural needs?

Does the product or program carry any risks?

1. Are there risks related to following the program's eating or exercise plans?

2. Are there risks related to using recommended drugs or supplements?

3. Do participants talk with a medical professional?

4. Does a medical professional oversee the program?

5. Will the program providers work with your personal health care provider if you have a medical condition or are taking prescribed medications?

How much does the program cost?

1. What is the total cost of the program?

2. Are there recurring costs such as weekly attendance fees, costs of food and supplement purchases, etc?

3. Are there additional fees for a follow-up program or to re-enter the program for follow-up after you lose weight?

4. Are there additional fees for medical tests?

What results do participants typically have?

1. How much weight does an average participant lose and how long have they kept off all or part of their weight?

2. Can the program provide references?

Armed with this information you should be better equipped to avoid anyone touting empty promises or those that cannot sustain long term results.

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