

## How a Very Low Calorie Diet Can Make You Gain Weight

The weight loss industry is a multi-billion dollar industry filled with meal plans that provide very low calorie levels. This is the magic bullet because if you follow these meal plans closely you will absolutely lose weight. You're happy and the company can say they gave you what they promised. Physiologically we know that very low calorie diets work for short term weight loss but the question is what are we doing to ourselves in the long run? The fact is; very low calorie diets (1,000 - 1200 calories or less) are contributing to weight gain more than they are helping people to find lasting weight loss. Many people feel they have to go on a very low calorie diet because this is the only way their weight will budge. Well...they're right and this is why. When a person goes on a very low calorie diet they are putting themselves into starvation mode. If they lose more than two pounds per week they can end up losing muscle mass which will negatively affect their metabolism. This is a topic that is worth spending a minute on. Let's look at what happened to Sally when she lost more than 2 pounds per week. It may be all too familiar to you! Sally's Story: Sally's resting metabolic rate (how many calories she burns) was 2500 calories per day. This means she was consuming around 2500 calories each day to maintain her weight where it was. She decided to lose weight by going on a "diet". The diet program estimated her calories at 1000-1200. She lost 10 pounds in two weeks. She is of course very happy about this weight loss. This is success! What she doesn't know is that part of that rapid weight loss is not fat but muscle. Sally then gets bored on this diet after the first month, which is typical, and goes back to her old eating habits. What happened to Sally's body during this diet? She lost lean body mass along with body fat. Muscle is the most important factor in keeping your metabolic rate high. One pound of muscle burns 30-70 calories while one pound of fat burns around 0-10 calories. During her weight loss in the last month Sally lost approximately 6 pounds of muscle mass (lean body mass). Sally's metabolic rate used to be 2500 calories for her weight to stay stable and now it has decreased to approximately 2100 calories. Now when she goes back to her old eating habits which were landing her on an average of 2500 calories in per day, she will gain her old weight back plus more. What do you think will happen when she goes on the next low calorie diet? What will happen after 4-5 weight loss diets? You guessed it! She will continue to decrease her metabolic rate. This is why so many people feel that they don't eat that much but still gain weight. It's true! To add insult to injury, there are also studies that suggest when people go back to their original eating habits they gain fat tissue rapidly instead of lean body mass. Don't despair dieters! There are steps you can take to get your metabolism fired up again but the first step is to stop low calorie diets. The next time you see a program that tries to estimate your calorie level by height, weight, and age; don't do it! This method is almost never accurate because they aren't taking into account your health history, genetics, age and all the other multitude of things that make up your individual metabolism. Remember, they want you to lose weight fast so you are satisfied with their product or service so they will give you the lowest calorie level. The only way to truly know how many calories you burn is to get your metabolism tested with a breathing test. These tests are now made affordable and can be done for \$50-\$125. To find someone in your area that provides these tests go to [www.healthetech.com](http://www.healthetech.com). Otherwise do not trust estimates from scales or calculations. They almost always under estimate your calorie level which will do you more harm than good. © Meri Raffetto, 2005. All Rights Reserved

## About the Author

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