

## What You Should Know about the U.S. News Best Diets List

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Ever hear your girlfriends raving about their [weight loss](#) success on the DASH Diet? Probably not. But after today, they might be. The *U.S. News and World Report* just released its first-ever [Best Diets](#) rankings--a list that evaluated 20 eating plans that have been expert-rated in seven categories, including short-term [weight loss](#), long-term weight loss, easiness to follow, safety, and nutritional completeness. The lesser-known government-endorsed **DASH Diet** (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) took the top rank as the “best overall” diet. The **Mediterranean Diet** (which Prevention’s [Flat Belly Diet](#) is based on) took the number two position on the list. While these diets were evaluated by 22 nutritionists and diabetes specialists, it’s important not to assume that the top diets on this list will be the best diets for you. We talked to nutrition experts to find out how this list and these diets can help you lose weight.

“This article is a good roadmap for people who are trying to find diets to fit their lifestyle,” says Sari Greaves, RD, national spokesperson for the ADA and nutrition director at the Step Ahead Weight Loss Center in Bedminster, NJ. “Different diets work for different people. As a dietician I’m looking at nutritional adequacy of a diet and for that reason I think the Dash Diet and the Mediterranean Diet rank on top because they have the most nutritionally-balanced action plans. When you’re looking at...overall health, wellness, and disease prevention, then these diets definitely rank in the top.”

The Dash Diet promotes very healthy principles, says Greaves. It’s high in fruits and veggies, whole grains, lean proteins and is also low in sodium. “It works. But in a fast-paced society, this detailed diet can be very overwhelming for someone who needs a simple plan.” If someone prefers simplicity, focus on the key components of the diet, like swapping white breads for whole wheat and full-fat dairy products for fat-free ones.

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As for the [meal replacement diets](#) on the list, like Slim Fast (#10), Greaves says they'll work for short-term weight loss by putting you on a reduced-calorie diet, but relying on meal replacement products or packaged foods cripples your ability to plan your own meals. Following these diets won't give you the skill set for how to eat healthy when you're at a restaurant or at a party.

"Even if you use any components of these diet systems, they can help pave the way to a healthier eating style but at the end of the day, you have to follow what's right for you."

"Several of the diets on this list are based on [highly processed foods](#)," says *Prevention* nutrition editor Joy Manning. "I would encourage everyone--whether they are dieting or not--to read the ingredient list of anything they eat and be aware of how much salt, sugar, preservatives, dyes, and other additives they may be ingesting. *Prevention* magazine urges readers to focus on good health. People should try to eat a wide variety of nutritious whole foods, especially vegetables, and strive to eliminate the processed, fast and highly refined food in their lives."

There needs to be a caveat attached to any diet rankings lists, says Jackie Newgent, RD, New York City-based nutritionist and author of *Big Green Cookbook*. "No one diet fits all. My advice before simply picking the number-one diet and running with it is to visit a registered dietitian (find one at [eatright.org](http://eatright.org)). They can determine which eating plan may or may not be right for your specific health needs. An RD can also develop a personalized [diet](#) for you, which can top any do-it-yourself generalized approach to dieting."