



## Adderall: Weight Loss Fix of the Stars?

From crash diets to killer workouts, it's little secret that the weight loss regimens of the stars are not always healthy ones.

But a relative newcomer to the celebrity weight loss buzz — the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) drug Adderall — has a number of nutrition experts worried that those hoping to emulate their favorite celebrities could be putting their health at grave risk.

According to a report in the New York Daily News on Monday, a number of female celebrities have used prescription Adderall, even if they have not been diagnosed with ADHD. And reports also suggest that some of these starlets have resorted to crushing and snorting these pills as a way to deliver a quicker effect.

"Often, if we're just beginning to hear of stories about inappropriate use of drugs, like Adderall, for weight loss, it means it's already a significant problem," says Jackie Newgent, a registered dietitian and New York City-based nutrition consultant.

Connie Diekman, president of the American Dietetic Association and director of university nutrition at Washington University in St. Louis, says that "few of my clients report using Adderall for weight loss, but I am very aware of the existence of this problem.

"While these identified risks are significant, the risk that is of biggest concern is the implication that, because celebrities do this, it must be safe," Diekman adds. "Celebrities are viewed as role models — or at least idols — for many people, and ... such potentially harmful behavior puts them and others [at] unknown

loss aid."

### Adderall's Diet Drug Origins

The latest news about possible Adderall abuse by some celebrities should not be considered the drug's debut on the weight loss scene. In fact, Adderall — also known generically as amphetamine-dextroamphetamine — was first marketed in the 1960s and 1970s as a diet pill. Since then, however, it has seen its greatest use among those who have ADHD.

In someone with ADHD, the drug re-establishes the chemical balance in the brain that is needed for focus and concentration. For these users, the drug is completely safe. But for those using the drug inappropriately, health risks abound.

Long-term use of Adderall may create the potential for liver problems later on, Diekman says. Other potential risks may manifest themselves much more rapidly.



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"We're not talking about candy here. Unfortunately, some legal drugs get passed around in certain circles like it's Halloween every day."

### **Does Hollywood Compound the Problem?**

But while Adderall may be the newest shortcut to weight loss that has graced the Hollywood scene, it certainly is not the first. And some nutrition experts believe that a general obsession with impossibly trim figures could be fueling such unhealthy diet trends.

"The pressure on young female actresses to stay as thin as possible is only increasing," says Joanne Ikeda, nutritionist emeritus at the University of California in Berkeley. "I watched 'Atonement' last night and thought that Keira Knightley looked like she was a refugee from a concentration camp. Surely she is on a semi-starvation diet that will eventually cause her health to deteriorate."

But the presence of extremely slim actresses in movies could lead to an unhealthy perception of weight in the general public — and a corresponding de-emphasis of healthier means of weight control.

"Paying attention to diet and exercising are healthy behaviors that work," says Dr. Jana Klauer, a physician specializing in metabolism and weight control, and author of the upcoming book "The Park Avenue Nutritionist's Plan."

"Taking medication to get a few pounds off an already slim body are just not worth the risk," she says. "And they will not have the desired result."

A better bet, nutrition experts agree, is sensible calorie control with an emphasis on proper nutrition and exercise.

"The message consumers should take from this is healthy weight is a lifestyle, built around the right food choices, proper portions and regular physical activity — not a magic drug, laxative or cigarette,"



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