



WEIGHT LOSS DIETS

Document produced in the framework of the partnership between

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Nowadays, the question of weight, in particular of growing overweight and obesity is a pervasive public health issue at the international level. Which explains the great interest of people in weight loss, notably via the numerous weight loss diets that exist today. The nutritional policies of the different countries are guided by the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a healthy diet. Henceforth, weight loss, depending on the method used to achieve it, may jeopardize people's health. Not to mention the more than significant involvement of the social standards of the "ideal body shape".

In this newsletter, you will find the physiological consequences of weight loss diets, and how they can have an impact on eating behavior and weight.

Statement on weight loss diets

Many reasons may motivate someone to undertake a weight loss diet:

- For medical reasons (overweight, obesity, articular problems, diabetes...)
- Social, family, and peer pressure to be slim
- Media pressure: the press, the media as well as social networks have an impact on the relationship to self-image and the relationship to food (1)

45% of the world's population in 2020 was trying to lose weight

(global advisor-2020)

42% in Europe

51% in Latin America

47% in North America

But, what are
the results?

Which diet?

- Limit sugary and starchy foods
- Eat more protein
- Limit fatty foods
- Fasting / intermittent fasting
- Eating certain foods at certain times
- Eating different foods separately
- Eating only raw foods



How long?

- 1 week
- 1 month
- 1 year
- A lifetime

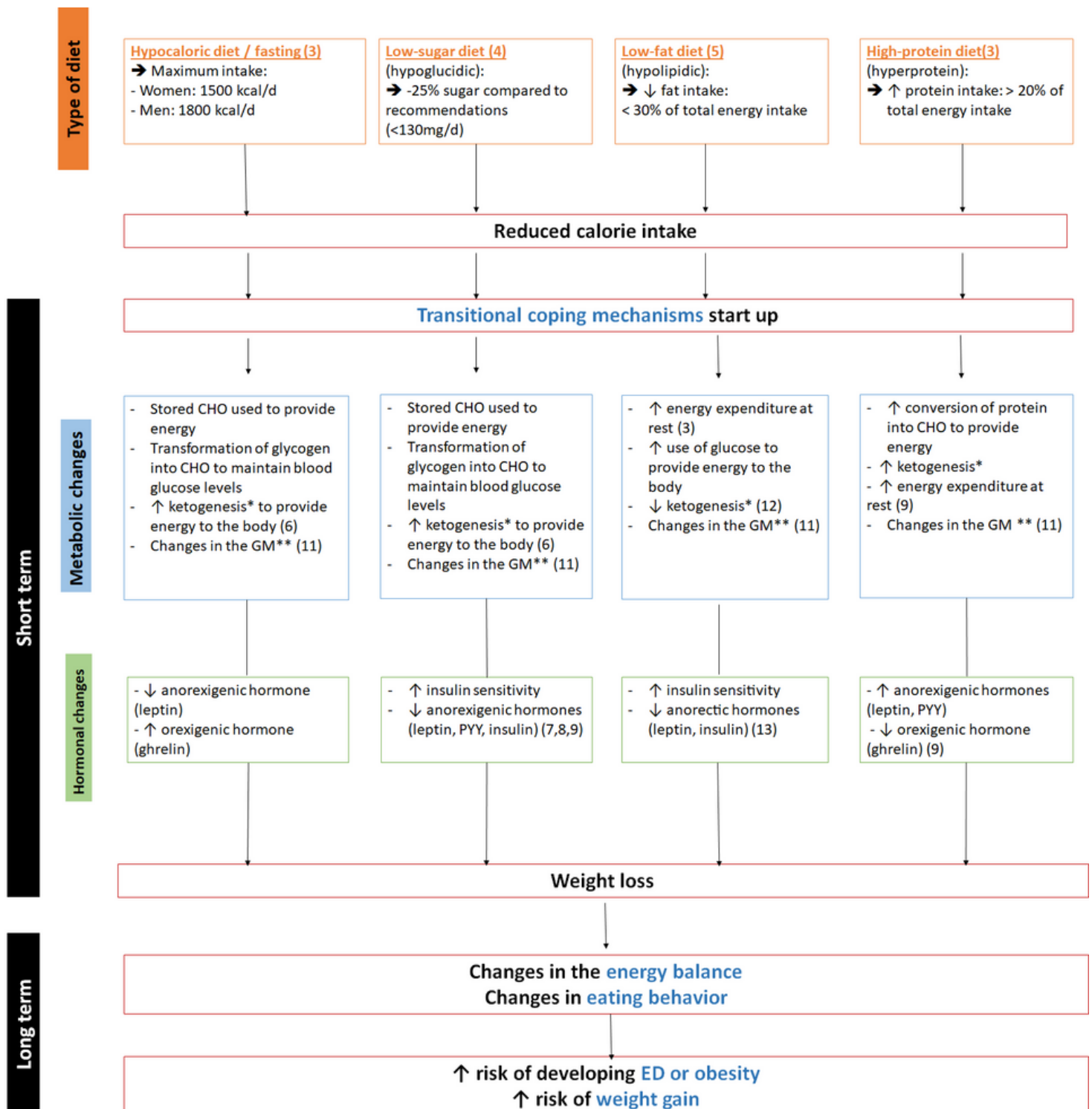
Then what?

Common objective
of weight loss diets:
**Dietary
restriction.**

Physiological effects of calorie restriction

Weight loss diets are intended to reduce one's dietary intake, which leads to the starting up of **transitional coping mechanisms** (2). In fact, restriction of one or several nutrients (depending on the diet) leads to metabolic changes, i.e. a **detour of the use of the remaining nutrients**, and also changes in the quantity and the sensibility (ability of the molecule to act) of the hormones associated with food intake. All these mechanisms vary in relation to **the individual and the severity of the diet**.

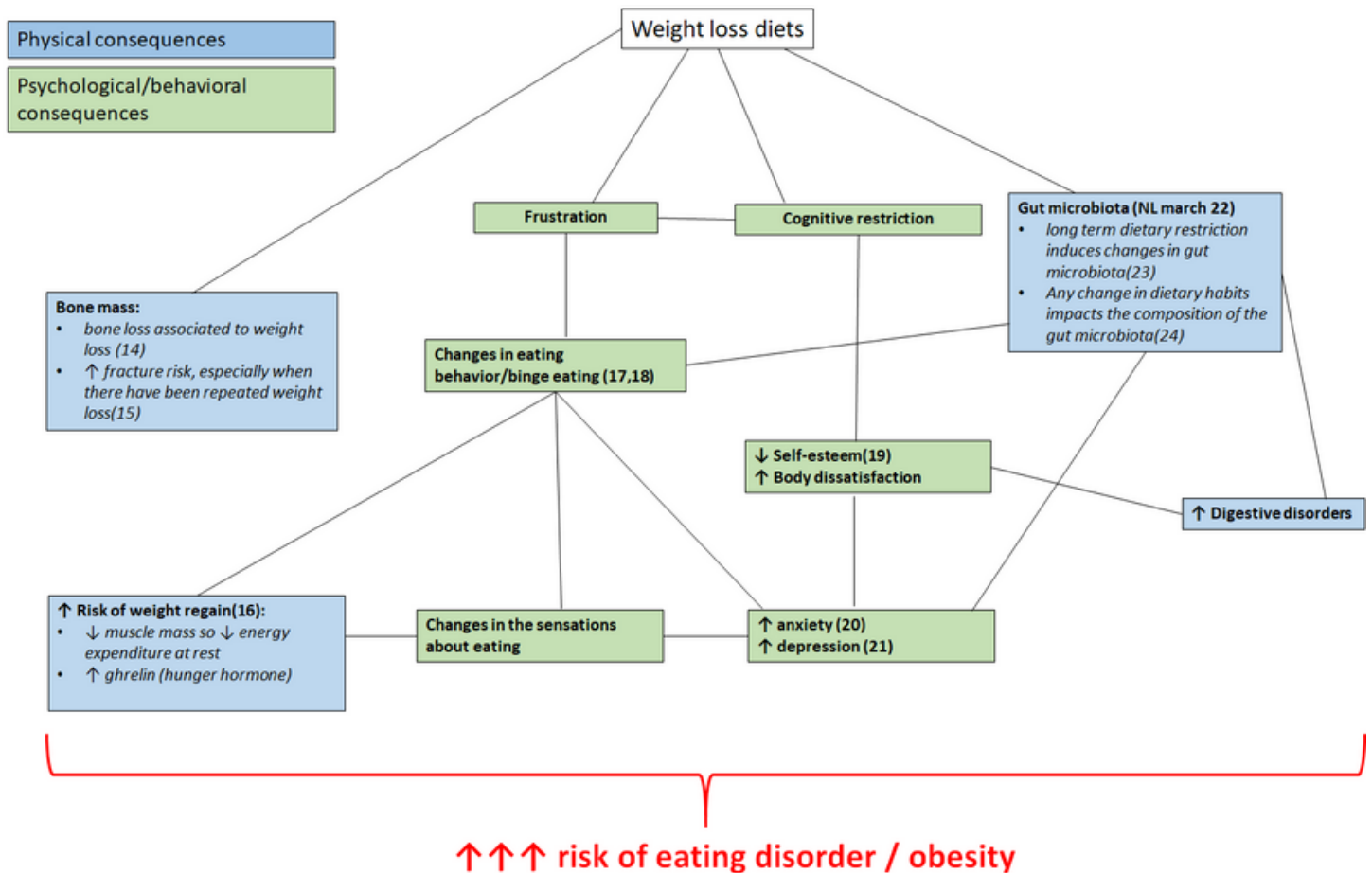
In the short term, these changes can be reversed once the diet is stopped ; however if the dieting continues, these modifications can be long-lasting and create a difficult-to-reverse alteration of eating behavior and of the hormonal regulation of food intake. There is then an increased risk of **developing an eating disorder (ED) and/or obesity**.



*Ketogenesis: transformation of fatty acids into ketone compounds to provide energy when the body lacks CHO intake

** Gut Microbiota: all the microorganisms of the human digestive tract

Consequences of calorie restriction



Weight loss diets can have several consequences on **physical health**, but also on **psychological health** ; the intensity and impact of these consequences vary according to **the individual** but also according to the **type of diet**, its **duration** and **severity**.

Any diet involves a change in dietary intake, whether it be in quality or in quantity. Yet, the scientific literature has widely highlighted the fact that all changes in diet induces an **alteration in the gut microbiota**, which may lead to changes in eating behavior as well as an increase in **anxiety, depression, and digestive disorders**.

Furthermore, the implementation of a weight loss diet is usually accompanied by a **strong cognitive restriction** (voluntary reduction of food intake to lose weight). Yet, scientific studies have underlined the negative impact of cognitive restriction on self-esteem and body dissatisfaction, which in turn lead to a **deterioration of mental health**.

The aim of weight loss diets is to reduce caloric intake to lose weight. Said restriction may easily lead to frustration which results in a strong increase of the risk of **binge-eating episodes**.

Frustration, low self-esteem, and anxiety can induce a change in **sensations about eating** (26,27) resulting in an increased risk of **weight regain**, but also and most importantly, an increased risk of **onset of ED / obesity**.

Avoid weight loss diets?

In cases of overweight and obesity, losing weight may be necessary and beneficial for **medical reasons**.

Nevertheless, there is a major risk of weight regain at one year for **80%** of people who have followed a weight loss diet (25).

Before taking any action to lose weight, it is advisable to think about:



- The **necessity of the weight loss** process: is your weight within the standard? ($18.5 < \text{BMI} (= \text{weight} / \text{height}^2) < 25 \text{ kg/m}^2$) If so, is it really necessary? If not, is your weight right for you?
- **Who** wants you to lose weight and why? You, your family and friends, your doctor?
- Your **eating habits**: try eating mindfully, that is **observe yourself** (mealtime, what you chose to eat, snacking...), **eat slowly** (take time to chew, put down the cutlery between each bite) and **eat without doing anything else** (be focused on sight, smell, taste). Taking time and fully enjoying what we eat helps to regulate the **quantities** eaten, and the **satisfaction** felt.
- **Eat according to your sensations about eating**: paying attention to your sensations of hunger and satiety allows you to meet your energy and nutrient needs and thus better regulate your weight (26,27).
- **Reconcile with food**: A balanced and diversified diet assumes that all foods have a purpose. Weight is a question of balance between the calories that are ingested and the ones that are expended (your physical activity) (28).
- **Physical activity** (2): it will participate in maintaining muscle mass which will be thus sufficient to remain in shape and guarantee the **balance of the body composition**.



Conclusion

Dieting to lose weight is not without consequences for your health... and for your weight!

The biological, behavioral and psychological impact of long-term weight loss makes dieting risky for your health.

Share your intentions with your doctor in order to be accompanied as best as possible if this weight loss is necessary for your health.



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