

Do Diet Pills Work?

According to an independent diet review website, the top four non-prescription diet supplements are Hoodia, Leptoprin, Cortislim and CarboExpel. Because these are sold as supplements they do not require FDA approval or even review; which means that they may or may not be effective! In any case, all of these supplements only claim they are effective when used in conjunction with a reduced-calorie diet and moderate exercise program...which in itself will promote weight loss!

- Hoodia comes from a cactus found in South Africa and is considered a potent appetite suppressant. However, there are 13 different species of the cactus and only one active ingredient which is found in small concentrations in one of the species. Because of this, authentication is difficult and the product may or may not work.
- Leptoprin is an herbal supplement and marketed to “the significantly overweight” because it claims to control levels of Leptin in the blood that may affect the storage and use of body fat. On going research shows that indeed Leptin is a hormone that is involved in fat storage and use, however, there is no proof that the ingredients in Leptoprin actually control those blood levels. Moreover, most of the research on Leptin has been done in rats so the translation to humans remains to be seen.
- Cortislim claims to reduce the levels of stress hormone (cortisol) which may be linked to excessive weight gain. However, in 2004 the FTC filed a claim against the manufacturer for making false or unsubstantiated claims. Although there is a small amount of evidence that supports the notion that high levels of cortisol in the blood leads to weight gain, there is no evidence that this supplement will decrease the levels.
- CarboExpel is a supplement that claims to block the absorption of carbohydrates in the gut, allowing you to eat high sugar foods without the calories. Although it may help control your calorie absorption, the GI side-effects may not be tolerable. The more carbs you eat the more “stuff” goes through your system.

Recently, the FDA approved an over-the-counter diet pill called alli, which is the same as the prescription drug Xenical. The primary function of alli is to block the absorption of fat which reduces your calorie intake. It is also intended to be used along with a reduced-calorie diet and exercise program. Side-effects are GI and most severe when beginning taking the drug and decrease in frequency with time. Most common complaints are loose and oily stool, increased flatulence and more frequent or urgent bowel movements. Clinical trails of alli show that it can increase your weight loss by 5% when combined with a reduced calorie diet and exercise plan. This is the only diet pill on the market with a growing body of research supporting its success.