

Materials	Access to the internet, paper, pen
Learning Outcome	Recognize fad diets, identify potential problems, and discuss how healthy lifestyle changes are a better option.

Description

Explain to the youth that fad diets are diets or eating patterns that are popular during a specific time. These diets are restrictive and follow a structure to change food choices and eating habits to fit the recommendations of the diet. Often, fad diets promise unreasonable health improvements. Share with the youth that some diets can be dangerous and it is important to be aware of them. Explain to the youth that according to the [Diet and Food Trends](#) web page of Canada's Food Guide, you can ask the following questions to identify fad diets:

- Is the diet low in calories?
- Could the diet be followed over the long term?
- Does the diet talk about fast results that seem unrealistic?
- Does the diet involve special foods or supplements from a specific company?
- Does the diet involve cutting out certain healthy foods or types of food that you enjoy for a long time?

Invite the youth to do an internet search for fad diets and find 2-3 fad diets to discuss. Ask the youth to explain what is involved in the diet, what the perceived health benefits are, and any other specifics. After they presented their findings to you, brainstorm with the youth why the diet:

- May not be healthy
- May not be sustainable
- May cause health problems

After the discussion, be sure to share with the youth the difference between a fad diet and deciding to make a healthy lifestyle change. A lifestyle change is keeping up similar habits for a prolonged amount of time. It also involves other components of your lifestyle other than just food (e.g., level of physical activity, sleep, and water consumption). Ask the youth if they can come up with ideas to alter the fad diets they have identified in order for them to be more about lifestyle changes.

Healthy Eating Competencies



THINK

Develop cognitive skills and strategies that facilitate knowledge about healthy foods, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



FEEL

Develop affective skills and strategies that facilitate healthy food relationships with themselves, with others, and with their environment.



ACT

Practice behaviour skills and strategies that facilitate healthy eating, food habits, food preparation, and food safety.



Reflection Questions

Reflection is important to support learning for healthy eating. Consider asking the youth the reflection questions below and discuss the answers together.

- *What role do you think media (e.g., television, magazine, and social media) plays in making fad diets popular?*
- *What ways can individuals increase healthy eating and healthy eating habits in general (e.g., only buying healthy foods, preparing food in advance so it is available when you are hungry, etc.)?*