

# Nutrition trends for a healthy weight in 2022

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Whether you have promised yourself you will get rid of the pandemic bulge, want to try out clean eating or are thinking of taking up fasting, it helps to get professional advice and avoid the masses of misinformation and untrustworthy opinions that abound when it comes to diet, weight loss and optimal nutrition.



Healthier eating and maintaining a good weight are amongst the worthiest goals we can have for the New Year, but how you go about it is important. After all, there's little point in reaching your goal weight in 2022, if you are unable to sustain it. Our panel of Registered Dietitians, all spokespeople for [ADSA](#) (The Association for Dietetics in South Africa) are weighing in on what's important to know about weight loss in 2022.

## ***Losing weight is not a sprint to the finish line***

Once we set a weight loss goal, we naturally want to get there as soon as possible. Unfortunately, sustainable weight loss doesn't work this way, and the best chance for long-term results comes with viewing your efforts as a patient, committed journey. Drawing on evidence-based research, our dietitians all agree that restrictive or radical eating fads must be avoided.

Lila Bruk says, "Set small achievable goals with the aim of achieving a loss of 0.5 to 1kg per week. See a dietitian to get an individualised eating plan and weight loss strategy tailored to your lifestyle and food preferences."

Zamantungwa Khumalo adds, "Allow your body time to adjust to the change in your eating habits. You cannot change years of poor eating habits in just one week or one month. A healthy, balanced diet is the way to go, along with lifestyle changes such as increased regular physical activity."

Retha Harmse concludes, "Choose healthier routines and habits rather than restrictions and deprivation. If your new healthy eating plan and exercise routine fit your lifestyle, then you are more likely stick to it long-term. Aim for progress rather than perfection, and avoid having an all-or-nothing approach which can lead to getting stuck. If you aren't able to make the best choice, then just make the better choice!"

## ***Think more than twice before you use weight loss supplements and home remedies***

With promises of the fastest, easiest results, weight loss supplements can be tempting. However, most products that are marketed as weight loss aids are poorly regulated and are not scientifically tested for efficacy. They may contain ingredients that have harmful effects on the body's organs, such as kidneys and liver. Many cannot be taken for extended periods of time, and therefore cannot offer you sustainable support.

Lila says, "There are no quick fixes and if it seems to be too good to be true then it is! Many of these products contain potentially harmful ingredients including stimulants, laxatives, diuretics and even banned substances. The only way to achieve successful weight loss and maintain your healthy weight is to follow a sustainable, balanced eating plan combined with regular physical activity."

### ***Why carbs are not the enemy***

Diets restricting carbohydrates remain trendy even though dietitians, nutrition researchers and other health professionals warn of the health risks of radically curbing carbs to favour proteins and fats.

Retha says, "Demonising carbohydrates for causing weight gain is like blaming cars for all accidents. It is a bit more complex than that! Carbohydrates have the same energy density as protein at 17 kilojoules per gram, and you can easily reduce your daily kilojoule intake for weight loss without eliminating carbohydrates. Carbs are important sources of fibre, vitamins and minerals. For weight loss eating plans, choose wholegrain and complex carbohydrates as far as possible. Make carbohydrates a part of your balanced diet and keep your portion sizes in check."

### ***How to stay fuller for longer when you are trying to lose weight***

There's nothing like hunger to derail your efforts to lose weight, and so preventing hunger is an important strategy when you are following a weight loss eating plan.

Lila advises, "To stay fuller for longer, fibre is really important. If you choose foods that are high in fibre, it will keep you full for longer as well as keep your blood sugar levels more balanced. High fibre foods include legumes, fruit, vegetables and whole grains such as brown rice and quinoa. Protein and fat also add to the satiety of a meal. To feel satisfied with your meals, ensure that half your plate is covered with vegetables and salad; a quarter of your plate is a serving of lean protein such as chicken, legumes or fish; and the last quarter is fibre-rich whole grains. Include a small portion of unsaturated fats such as olives, avocado, nuts, seeds or olive oil for a fully balanced and filling meal that will enhance your weight loss."

### ***What is 'clean eating' - and should we do it?***

Clean eating trends have become increasingly popular and are often taken up by those committed to healthy lifestyles, wellness and self-care. Generally, there is a focus on eating whole-foods and an avoidance of highly processed ones. Some clean eating trends promote organically produced foods and eschew foods containing preservatives or food additives. There is no one clean eating regime but the trend does encompass some fad diets that restrict the intake of certain foods such as dairy or animal proteins, or food components such as gluten.

Zamantungwa says, "There are many different definitions of clean eating around the world, however in simple terms 'clean eating' is a healthy balanced diet. Include a variety of the different whole-foods such as fruits and vegetables; focus on lean meat, skinless chicken and fish; eat whole grains and small amounts of healthy mono- and poly unsaturated fats on a daily basis. Drink plenty of water and choose healthy cooking methods such as grilling, baking, steaming or boiling instead of frying. When eating clean, heavily refined and processed foods should be avoided."

Retha warns against the tendency towards perfectionism when it comes to the clean eating concept. She says, "On the one hand, you have the logical reasoning behind it, that 'clean foods' are generally less processed and refined, and are more whole foods. The health benefits of this are not in any dispute. On the other hand, though, following clean eating regimes can elicit so much food fear, food guilt and cause people to become overly restrictive and anxious about food. It's important to take a balanced approach that enables you to enjoy your food as you make the best food choices that are available to

you at the time, and rather avoid radicalism which causes unnecessary stress around food and eating.”

### ***Is fasting for weight loss a good idea?***

Intermittent fasting regimes focus on when you eat rather than what you eat. They demand lifestyle changes and should not be done without consultation with your doctor first as fasting is not safe for all people.

Retha says, “Fasting shows quick weight loss but it is not sustainable. It can lead to muscle breakdown; a slower metabolic rate and interference with your liver enzymes. When we are in a fasting state, the body’s energy first comes from glycogen, the glucose stores in our muscle and liver, and then from your muscle in a process called gluconeogenesis. Fat is more like a two-day notice account and it takes longer than an intermittent fasting period to convert fat stores to ketones as energy. For those who are serious about achieving their weight loss goals this year, following a balanced, healthy eating plan and getting daily physical activity is the safe and sustainable pathway to success!”

If you would like to speak to a nutrition expert about your nutrition and weight goals for 2022, visit [ADSA](#) to find a registered dietitian in your area.

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