

Setpoint

Have you ever wondered why some people can eat whatever they want and stay thin, while others gain weight?

Just as with eye colour, facial features, or type of hair, when it comes to body height and size, **it's in your genes.**



The current theory is that when you've finished growing, you have a stable weight range, known as your **set-point** - that is, the weight your body maintains when you **consistently...**

- eat when you are hungry
- stop eating when you are full and
- exercise moderately

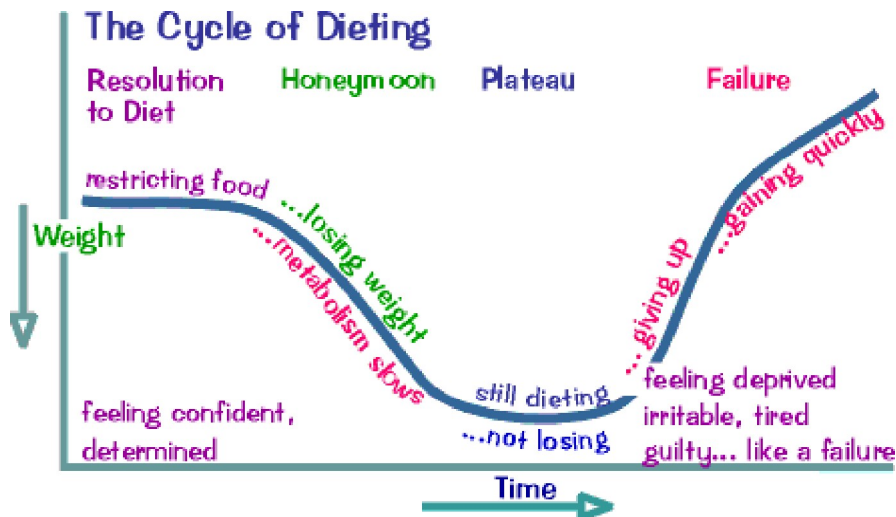
Your set-point may fluctuate 5-10 pounds (2-5 kgs.), but for most adults, set-point stays remarkably stable over the years if not interfered with by dieting.

What they don't tell you about diets...

Scientists are working to find answers but here's what we know so far... It's not just a matter of willpower - there's a biological reason why diets don't work.

When you **restrict how much you eat by dieting** your body says:

*Wait a minute - I listen to my genes, not fashion designers.
And I need energy to feel good and have fun.*



Adapted with permission from: Cliska, Donna. *Beyond Dieting Workshop*. The Toronto Hospital, 1993.

When you diet, your body tries to maintain its natural set-point range by slowing its metabolism. That's the rate at which your body uses up the calories you take in.

- Although it may be easy to lose weight at first... if your target weight (the weight you're trying to reach) is below your natural set-point range, losing further weight becomes more difficult.
- When you give up on a diet, it takes time for your metabolism to return to its natural range.
- During this time, it's easy to re-gain the weight you had lost, **and more**.
- Most dieters don't consider their body's set-point range and strive for unrealistic target weights.
- Most dieters feel discouraged and guilty when they don't reach their goal.
- They are likely to overeat to make up for feeling so deprived of food during the diet.

Body image and self-esteem sink ...



...weight goes up!
Pressure grows to try the next diet plan that promises success.

The problems with dieting to lose weight...

- Dieting can make you feel guilty
- In teens, dieting can cause permanent damage, such as loss of

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about doing something as natural as eating.

- Diet plans and supplements are often lacking important nutrients needed for health and energy.
- Dieting can throw off body chemistry and fluid balance, along with energy, moods, and concentration.

permanent damage, such as loss of normal bone density.

- **95% of people who lose weight by dieting gain the weight back and more!**

- Repeated dieting may actually result in an elevated set-point. This means it's possible to start off in a healthy weight range and **diet your way up** to an unhealthy weight range.

Reality Check

- The diet industry consumes billions of dollars every year.
- Dieting results in an obsession with food and eating.
- For most people, diets don't work...

- One of the many normal body changes for girls at puberty is putting on body fat - it's **necessary** for the storage of female hormones, the beginning of menstruation and reproductive function. How much body fat you gain depends on how active you are, your food choices, and your **genes**.

- Body changes occur in mid-life too. Metabolism slows, making weight gain common unless you decrease how much you eat or increase your activity.

Don't rely on the numbers on the scale or tape measure to feel good about yourself. There are alternatives to the dieting lifestyle...