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Weight Solutions

The latest catchphrase among people is fitness. Thanks to growing awareness about health issues people are getting conscious about their health. The bulging tummies are the thing of past. Today, people are opting for weight solutions through which they are able to shed their extra baggage.



45-year-old Raghav had been a body builder in his youth. He has taken good care of his body and this shows as he easily slices off 5 years from his age. But, when his trousers began to fit him a bit snug, he decided to replace his lunch with meal replacement drinks.

Sudha has a jam-packed schedule. So much so that sometimes finding time to grab a bite sounds a luxury. Hence, her office drawer is stacked with meal replacement drinks, which she makes in a jiffy while on go and keeps energy bars in her bag to ward off hunger when it strikes.

Gone are the days when bulging tummy and chubby cheeks used to attract people. Today, this perception is changing fast and people have realised the importance of health and are waking up to the idea of healthy living.

As obesity reaches epidemic proportions many diet solutions proliferate to bail you out. But, are they as good as they claim and can they replace real food? Let us do a reality check.

MEAL REPLACEMENT DRINKS
These products have high protein, low fat, moderate amounts of carbohydrates and are rich in vitamins and minerals.

The source of carbohydrates in these drinks comes from maltodextrin, which is a wheat based derivative. Unlike simple sugars that spike up your insulin levels, the complex carbohydrate enters your blood stream in "time-released" manner. This helps to stabilise insulin secretions, minimizing the potential for excess fat deposition.

These products obtain their protein from high-quality whey and egg sources rather than cheaper alternatives. By nature, whey and egg proteins are maximally absorbed into your body. This allows a greater amount of protein to be utilised for important functions such as tissue growth and repair—a critical factor if you are a serious athlete.

REALITY CHECK
"Meal replacement liquid diets (500-800 calories a day) usually offer too little fibre and lack important antioxidants found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This can lower resistance to disease," informs Honey Khanna, Chief Dietician with Max Hospitals. "It will not be suggested absolutely for specific cases like diabetes, cardiac problems and renal problems and in pregnancy," adds Honey Khanna.

Meal Replacement Drinks can be used to substitute a meal, but only as an adjunct to a balanced diet and exercise program and after consultation with a nutritionist.

PROTEIN SHAKES
Protein is a derivative of the Greek word proteios, meaning "essential to life" because, unlike carbohydrates and fat, protein contains sulphur and nitrogen, two vital elements for every cell in your body. "Anyone who does not get enough protein through everyday diet is a fit candidate for protein supplements," says Nisha Varma, Reebok University Master Trainer.

Protein shakes are the latest entrants in the world of protein supplements. They are characterized by high protein content with some essential fats and low carbohydrates.

REALITY CHECK
Whether you are trying to lose weight or bulk up, have protein shakes post workout, preferably whey to supplement the nutrition needed by muscles to overcome the wear and tear effect of exercise.

ENERGY BARS
Energy bars may be high in protein, high in carbohydrates, low in fat, or contain a balanced ratio of these nutrients. The segment is replete with imported, organic and indigenous varieties. The list of ingredients is impressive: honey, oats, jaggery, roasted apple. Energy bars are good to stave off in-between meal time cravings.

REALITY CHECK
They are good for people on go. Also works well for someone who needs an extra dash of energy while sprinting. But, if you rely on it way too much, it's not good.

"The best way to lose excess fat and maintain a healthy weight in the long term is to follow a balanced calorie-controlled diet that improves your eating habits and take regular aerobic exercise," says Honey Khanna, Chief Dietician with Max Hospitals


