

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## WELLNESS WORKSHEET 82

### Checklist for Evaluating Weight-Loss Books

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Many weight-loss books on the market advocate ineffective or unsafe strategies for losing weight. Choose a diet book and evaluate the plan it advocates by answering the following questions.

**Overall emphasis:** What is the key emphasis or “hook” of the plan you are considering? Is it based on any research studies? If so, what type of studies were they? How long did the studies continue, and how many people participated? Were the studies published in a reputable journal?

**Author credentials:** Who is the author of the book? What is his or her education and experience relating to health and weight loss?

**Overall dietary plan:** Is a particular macronutrient distribution suggested? Are certain foods emphasized or severely limited? How does the basic dietary advice compare to the recommendations presented in your text?

**Suggested energy intake:** How many daily calories are recommended? Is it a reasonable energy intake for you? Would the energy intake recommendation represent a large cut in your daily intake?

**Special costs:** Does the plan recommend that you purchase any special foods, products, or supplements? If so, do the suggestions seem reasonable? What are the total costs involved? Does the plan include particular brands of foods and supplements rather than general dietary advice?

**Physical activity:** Does the book include a plan for increasing physical activity? If so, how does it compare with the activity recommendations in your text and with your current activity level?

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WELLNESS WORKSHEET 82 — continued

**Behavior change:** Does the plan advocate changes in your diet and activity-related behavior? Is a complete behavior change plan provided?

**Maintenance:** How long does the plan presented in the book continue? Is advice provided for maintaining weight loss once you reach your goal?

**Personal likes and dislikes:** Does the plan appeal to you personally in its diet, activity, and behavior change recommendations? Does it seem like it would work for you given your daily routine and budget?

**Red flags:** Do advertisements for the book or the book itself contain any of the following red flags?

- Quick weight loss
- Weight loss without effort
- Use of expensive products
- Exaggerated claims of effectiveness or claims of being based on secret information or scientific breakthroughs
- Simplistic conclusions drawn from complex studies or recommendations based on a single study
- Very limited selection of foods
- Unbalanced eating plan that differs dramatically from the dietary advice offered by government agencies and major health organizations

**Overall impressions:** What are your overall impressions of the plan presented in the book? How does the advice in the book stack up against the advice in your text? What is your estimation of its overall safety and effectiveness?

SOURCES: Federal Trade Commission and International Food Information Council Foundation. 2000. *Weight Loss: Finding a Weight Loss Program That Works for You*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Trade Commission; American Dietetic Association. 2000. *Fad Diets: What You May Be Missing* (<http://www.eatright.org/nfs/nfs0200b.html>; retrieved March 30, 2003); Federal Trade Commission. 1997. *Paunch Lines: Weight Loss Claims Are No Joke for Dieters* (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/alerts/paunch.htm>; retrieved March 30, 2003).