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A cookie a day can pack on pounds

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GRANADA, , 11 (UPI) -- A chocolate cookie a day can add 20 pounds on an energetically-balanced child in four years, University of Granada researchers said.

"Miracle diets," such as the South Beach diet, the Atkins diet or the Artichoke diet, lack a scientific foundation and are a danger for health, but a daily 500 to 700 calorie deficit, depending on body weight, age and physical exercise, can help an individual lose 6.5 pounds a month, said Emilio Martínez de Victoria Munoz of the University of Granada in Spain.

When the amount of consumed calories is similar to that of calories used during the day, the energy balance is kept stable and weight is kept constant, however, when calories exceed used calories the balance is disturbed and weight is gained.

Fad diets lose glycogen and water -- not fat -- and that's why those who rapidly lost pounds gain them back quickly, explained Martinez de Victoria Munoz.

The researcher also stressed that a high-fiber diet helps control obesity, as fiber-rich foods facilitate a lower intake because their mastication time is longer and, due to their volume, produce the filling sensation more quickly. In addition, fiber speeds intestinal transit time while slowing food absorption, making weight loss easier.

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Alice Pittard, aged 3, plays with the necklace of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-CA, during a news conference to support the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) on Capitol Hill in Washington on September 6, 2007. (UPI Photo/Roger L. Wollenberg)

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