

FOOD COURT

Meal Replacement Ruling

Research Deems Some as Helpful Weight Loss Tools



MEDIFAST

VS.

SLIM-FAST



Once deemed unhealthy, the latest research suggests meal replacements assist in healthy long-term weight loss. Meal-replacement products include shakes, bars and other products that are portion-controlled with a known amount of calories, fat and protein and are fortified with vitamins and minerals.

Research suggests patients who consume meal-replacement products can lose up to five times more weight and keep the weight off at the end of one year than those who consume the same amount of calories through conventional foods.

There is no magic ingredient to the meal-replacement products. Success can result from the balanced distribution of nutrients in the meal replacements, to portion control and easy access. Meal replacements make it easy to keep track of calories and it is less tempting to consume the second helping when real food is less available.

Meal replacements should not be a substitute for real food over a long period of time. A healthy meal-replacement plan includes whole food snacks and meals around the meal replacement products and provides a plan to transition away from the products to whole foods once the goal weight is achieved.

Products can be found in supermarkets, health food stores and online. A registered dietitian or licensed nutritionist can help you determine which weight loss products are best for you.

The Verdict is In

More weight will be lost on the Medifast plan, although one plan is not recommended over the other. Slim-Fast can be purchased at the supermarket, while Medifast must be purchased online, through a health professional or certified provider. Both plans include different kinds of replacement meals, whole food snacks and conventional dinners. To determine an effective plan for you, discuss your weight-loss goals with a physician, registered dietitian, or licensed nutritionist.

FITNESS **Swing Off the Calories**

Instead of forcing yourself to work out, why not spend time on an activity you find fun? Research shows workouts that are enjoyable are performed more often on a consistent basis.

Swing dancing is a popular form of calorie burn in the Metro D.C. area. At www.gottaswing.com, affordable swing lessons and events are featured almost every evening and on the weekends at various locations. Sessions are open to couples and singles, young and old.

One hour of swing dancing is an excellent form of aerobic activity. The American Heart Association recommends participating in continuous activity for 30-60 minutes most days of the week. Swing dancing can burn up to 300 calories an hour and clear the mind. Swing dancing events are also a great way to network and meet other people interested in working out and having fun.

