

Magic Diet Pill Coming?

Have you heard of the over the counter diet pill Orlistat? A joint FDA advisory committee voted 11-3 to recommend approval of this diet aid. The agency usually follows the recommendations of its outside panels of experts, but the final decision is still to come and could take months. In that time, people should consider the facts and their options regarding weight loss.

Orlistat is a fat blocking pill that will be obtained without a doctor's prescription. Its action is to render 25% of one's fat intake indigestible and therefore it is eliminated. Unfortunately, the 'elimination' of the undigested fat is somewhat unpleasant: oily, slick stools, diarrhea, and anal spotting. Does 25% less calorie digestion really sound worth it? Is this just another way for drug companies to make millions of dollars while taking advantage of people's need to be slim? Is there really a magic formula to obtaining and maintaining a healthy weight?

Why is it that people don't want to hear that the old 'tried and true' method of pushing away from the table and exercise? Have we become so lazy? It seems that anything worthwhile is worth working for. People put more time, effort and money into maintaining their vehicle than their own body, which is irreplaceable. When something goes wrong with one's vehicle, it's relatively easy to fix it up or replace it. The human body, as amazing machine as it is, can only take so much abuse before it shuts down. It's time people start to put the same effort into their own health. Not only would individuals benefit, but the collective benefit as a community of health care users would be substantial.

In the time it would take to visit the washroom several times a day while using this diet pill, one could make a significant caloric expenditure in the form of exercise. See the following chart for an example of ways to burn calories:

Activity (10 minutes)	123 lb. female	170 lb. male
Cycling (5.5 mph)	36	49
Cycling (9.4 mph)	56	74
Running (8 min/mile)	113	150
Running (11.5 min/mile)	76	100
Stairmaster	88	122
Walking (3.5 mph)	45	59
X country skiing	80	106
Rope jumping (slow)	82	116
Rope jumping (fast)	100	142

Call me crazy, but I think I would enjoy some of these activities far more than sitting on the commode. This exercise, coupled with sensible eating could make a real difference in a person's long-term health. Orlistat is recommended to be used for six month intervals, however, many people believe if a little of something is good, more is better. The

potential for the abuse of this drug is high given some people's compulsion to be thin. It seems there is a serious lack of common sense and self-control. Our grandparents, who perhaps lived a more physical life without many of the modern conveniences of today, had the right idea in terms of maintaining a healthy weight. It's not rocket science. If one eats too much, one cannot look like a supermodel. If one moderates eating and does some exercise, one has a fighting chance to look their best.

If you are considering the use of this drug once it hits the market, perhaps you should think again. In the time before its available, do yourself a favor and try to change your lifestyle to incorporate more healthy habits. The use of Orlistat does nothing to address the root of the obesity problem. See what you can do with your body and its composition prior to going to the drastic measures this drug suggests. Find something enjoyable in the form of exercise and see how you feel. My clients often tell me that the main reason they are sticking to their new routine is how great they are feeling. The additional benefit of exercise is how their body composition and weight is changing. If you are seriously considering a lifestyle change and don't know where to start, perhaps consult your doctor or a personal trainer to get you on the right track.

By Shawna Kaminski

Shawna is a long time teacher and fitness trainer. Check out how she's helping her clients make healthy life enhancing changes at: <http://members.shaw.ca/shawna.kaminski>