

HOODIA... LOTS OF HOOPLA, LITTLE SCIENCE...

Smart ways to make those new year's resolutions stick...

By February, many New Year's Resolutions have started to slip. Looking for a little extra help, people often head to the supplement aisle to help them reach their weight loss goal. While supplements can be useful in aiding weight loss, it's important to be smart about which ones you're using and not fall for the latest fad.

One of the most popular weight loss supplements is Hoodia. And with claims such as "Fool your brain into thinking you're full" and "Kills your appetite, ups your mood, and gives you waves upon waves of energy," it's easy to understand why Hoodia is one of the top selling diet pills.

WHAT IS HOODIA?

Hoodia gordonii is a cactus that grows in the African desert. Marketers claim that African bushmen eat Hoodia to stave off hunger during long hunts. This makes a great story, but is it really true? Seems like it. Researchers have isolated a specific component of Hoodia that is thought to be responsible for suppressing the appetite, but they don't yet know exactly how it works in the body.

IS HOODIA SAFE?

To date, there are no reported adverse reactions to Hoodia, and no known interactions with other herbs, supplements, or drugs. But just because there are no reported issues, doesn't mean it's safe. There has been very little human research on Hoodia, most of which has been by the supplement makers themselves, and hasn't been published in peer-reviewed journals.

The cost alone may be a deterrent to many people. Labels on most Hoodia products recommend taking one to two capsules, 30-60 minutes prior to meals. This translates to three to six pills daily. At \$30 to \$60 for a bottle of 60 capsules, Hoodia's not a cheap fix.

Hoodia seems to be safe and effective, based on current limited knowledge. But, as with any dietary supplement, there is always the risk of unknown adverse side effects. Stay tuned to the latest information as new research is published.

So, while Hoodia may be one of the more popular weight loss supplements on the market, below you'll find some natural and effective ways to rev up your metabolism and burn fat:

STRENGTH TRAIN

Incorporate strength training into your workout regime - the more muscle mass you have, the more calories you burn, even at rest. Also add intervals, or periodic bursts of intensity, throughout your cardio sessions. Along with burning more calories, you'll improve your cardiovascular fitness.

EAT MORE

More often, that is. Every time you eat, you're increasing your metabolism. Aim for a small meal or snack every three to four hours throughout the day.

HAVE A CUP O' JOE

Drinking a cup or two of coffee, especially before a workout, can increase the amount of fat burned during exercise.

GREEN TEA EXTRACT

A compound in green tea called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) may help with weight loss. Preliminary research suggests taking 90 mg of EGCG, three times daily.

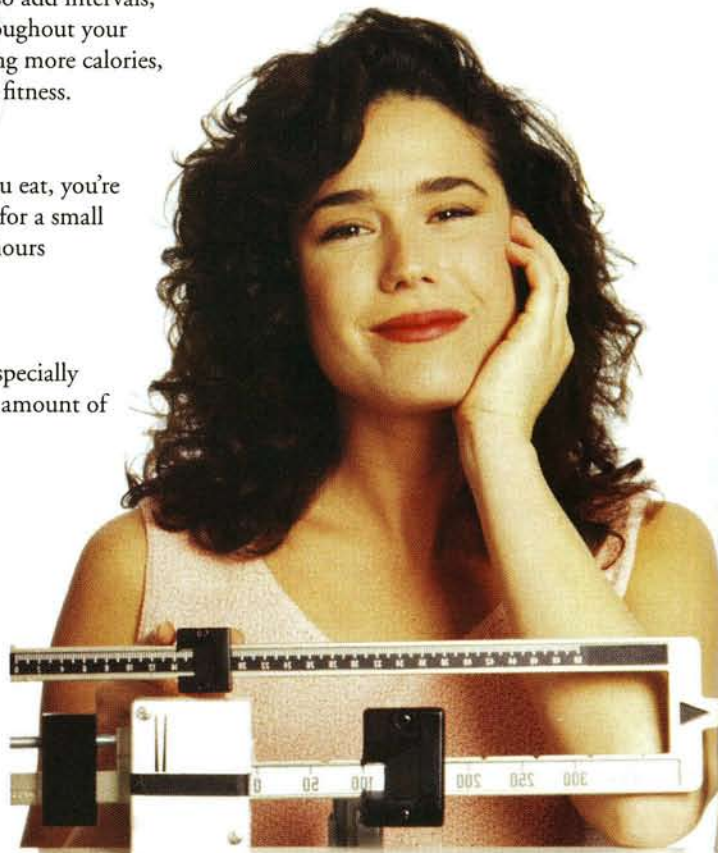
CLA

Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) is a type of fat found naturally in some meat sources that may

help decrease body fat and increase lean mass. The recommended dosage is 4-6 grams daily, divided into two to three doses throughout the day.

As always, if you decide to take any dietary supplements, check with your physician first. And remember that if a claim for a product seems too good to be true, it probably is!

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