The Truth About the HCG Diet

Medical, Weight Loss Tips

There is no scientific evidence that HCG hormone administration on its own causes weight-loss. Studies show the weight loss occurring on this plan results only from the restricted calorie intake that accompanies it. In Australia, the use of HCG has not been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) as safe or effective for weight loss. The most effective approach to weight loss is eating regular nutritious meals, incorporating regular exercise and approaching any psychological barriers to incorporating healthy changes.

The current popularity of the HCG diet is based around claims that it boosts metabolism and helps lose large amounts of fat without feeling hungry. So, what is the evidence around using HCG for weight-loss?

What is it?

Human Chorionic Gonadotropin, otherwise known as HCG, is a hormone primarily produced in high levels during early pregnancy by the placenta, otherwise in smaller doses by the pituitary gland and helps maintain production of progesterone and estrogen hormones. HCG can be used as a fertility prescription drug particularly administered for women and men, and for other medical conditions. In 1954, a British doctor named Simeons created a weight loss program (The Simeons therapy) in which a patient was on a low calorie diet of 500 calories (kcal) a day and received daily injections of 125 IU of HCG over a period of 3.5 to 6 weeks in order to achieve weight loss quickly, not feel weak, not be hungry and lose fat from hard to lose weight areas (such as stomach, hips, things and upper arms).
The HCG weight loss diet generally includes:

1. **Loading Phase** – start taking HCG, eat plenty of high-fat, high-calorie foods for two days

2. **Weight loss phase** – continue taking HCG, eat only 500cals/day for 3-6wks with only 2 meals a day

3. **Maintenance phase** – stop taking HCG, increase food intake gradually, avoid sugar and starch for 3wks.

**The evidence for use**

While there is not a lot of recent research literature in the use of HCG for weight-loss, existing studies concluded that weight loss achieved by the HCG diet was likely from the low calorie intake (500 cal/day) that was used with HCG hormone administration (3-7) as there was no evidence that HCG itself caused weight loss. This was shown by the relatively same weight loss between the two groups in studies, the group taking the HCG injections and the placebo group. So overall the literature consensus thus far is that there is no scientific evidence that HCG on its own causes weight-loss, reduces hunger or redistributes fat. Therefore, there is no reason to recommend taking HCG injections for the purpose of weight loss.

**What are the benefits/limitations for weight loss?**

As already identified, most of the weight loss seen from research literature on HCG was from the accompanying low calorie diet that participants were on. However, such severe calorie restriction usually includes a loss of lean muscle mass which can compromise the metabolism. Overall, the HCG diet would be considered a short term fix like any other fad diet with the main component for weight loss being a very low calorie diet (500 calories a day) which is unlikely to have a successful and beneficial long term impact on weight and overall health as it does not address lifestyle behaviour changes.

**Known clinical outcomes**

Real HCG in the form of injections is only available through a doctor’s prescription and only this form can raise blood levels of HCG, not homeopathic products sold online. In America, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved HCG as a weight loss drug and are in fact illegal. In Australia, the use of HCG has not been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Association (TGA) as safe and effective for weight loss which means the products and ingredients of HCG for weight loss are unregulated. Companies selling HCG for nutrition and weight loss purposes will generally include this medical disclaimer on this product. As HCG for weight loss is not FDA or TGA approved, there are no known side effects when used for weight loss purposes. However, the accompanying very low calorie HCG diet of 500 calories/day should only ever be used under proper medical supervision (sometimes used as part of medical treatment to lessen health conditions) to monitor any side effects and ensure nutritional requirements are met.

**Our LifeShape clinical recommendations for weight loss**

The LifeShape Clinic recommendations for weight loss is focused on utilising the combined expertise of our team of health care professionals that include Dietitians, Exercise Physiologist, Psychologists and Medical Doctor so that we take care of your overall health status. Our team can help individualise a plan to help you achieve your weight loss goals while building sustainable long term changes that add to your health such as eating regular nutritious meals, incorporating regular exercise and approaching any psychological barriers to incorporating healthy changes.

**References**


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We're here to help you take the first step

We know losing weight can be challenging, but we'll be with you every step of the way. Please get in touch and our friendly Client Services Team will contact you to answer all your questions.

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Truth #1—The hCG diet results in quick weight loss of up to 1 pound per day. This is really a no-brainer. Just by restricting your calorie intake alone to the hCG diet-recommended 500 calories per day will result in quick weight loss. The truth is that the hCG diet can result in fast and significant weight loss in a short period of time, but it is not a healthy or in most cases a permanent fix for losing weight and fighting obesity. Testimonies on the internet are convincing of the diet's effectiveness for rapid weight loss, but a careful search of the testimonies also reveals that the hCG diet can cause serious health problems. The HCG diet is an extreme low-calorie diet that proponents claim will make you lose weight fast (1-2 lbs or 0.5 to 1kg per day) but without feeling hungry or losing muscle. While this might sound appealing, the HCG diet is not risk-free and there are some red flags of which you should be aware. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to cut through the hype, provide a level-headed look at the HCG diet, scientific evidence, what you can reasonably expect, risks and side effects, and a final
Ever wondered if the hCG diet is the best way for you to lose weight fast? We explore the research behind the controversial diet in this post. Everywhere I looked, I found page after page of doctors and experts warning people about the hCG diet. They all said basically the same thing, stay away from it. Odds are, once you get off the diet and after your hormone treatment has ended, you'll end up eating everything in sight to make up for the extreme reduction in calorie intake. The truth is that the HCG diet CAN cause damage to both your metabolism and your thyroid function and I will explain it in this post. As a physician, I've had the advantage of treating patients before, during and after undergoing the HCG diet. I know that so many of you out there are desperate to lose weight and you'll basically do anything to get there, but let me tell you this: There is a better way to lose weight and it has nothing to do with the HCG diet and I will explain more about this in the post as well. Let's dive in.