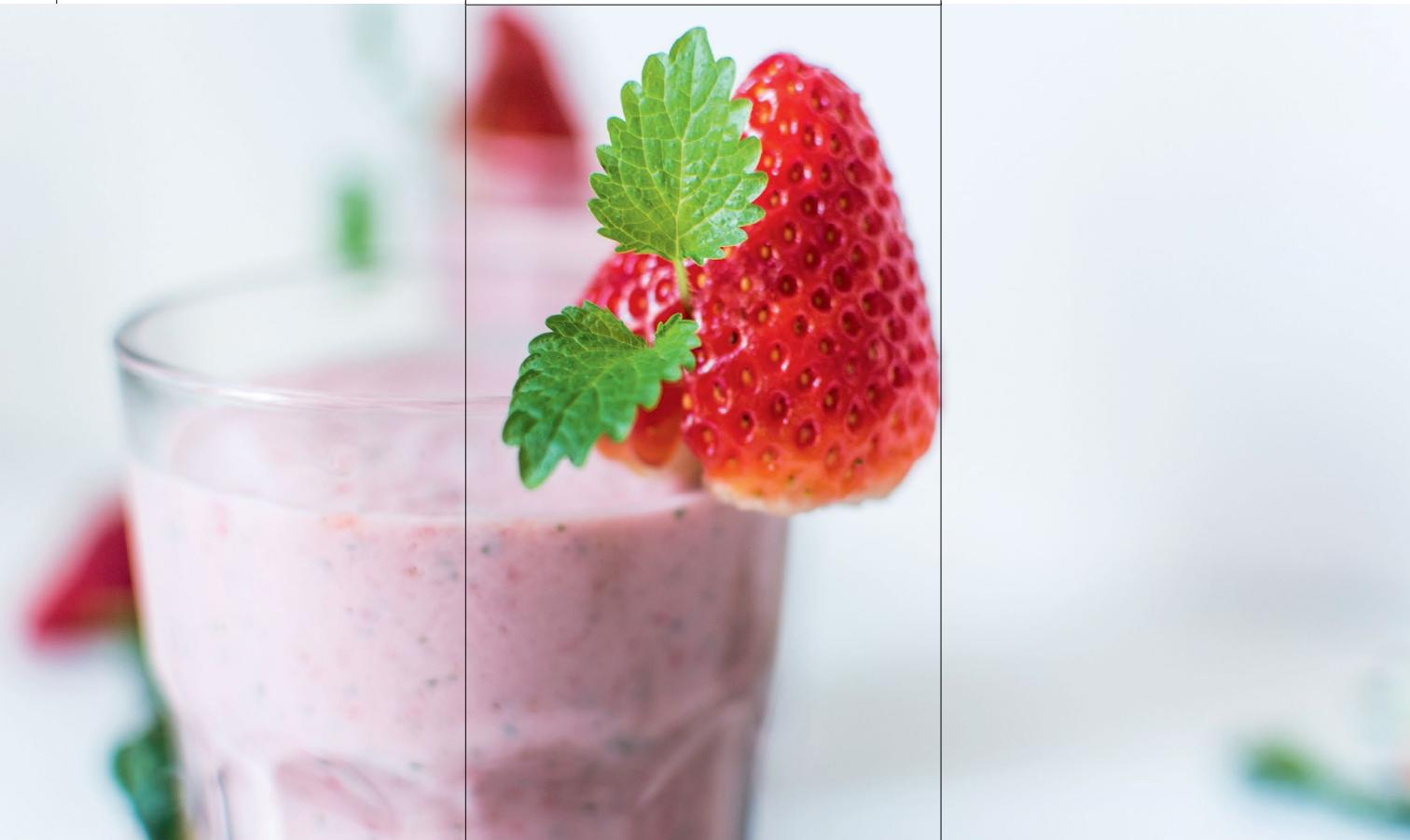


Summer body prep

Nutridiet is the current liquid diet craze that's taking the UAE by storm. But does it really work? **EL** puts it to the test.



Many people – myself included – are sceptical about the so-called ‘liquid only’ diet, where you consume only liquids for a few weeks in order to lose weight. I have a few friends who tried doing it, only to give up within a few days and then eat everything in sight.

However, I've always been keen to try it as a means to lose weight fast for a special event (a wedding, for instance). With summer here, we decided to put Nutridiet - the latest trend gripping the UAE - to the test. Established in the late eighties by a Norwegian/Danish physician, Nutridiet consists of a series of low calorie products, designed to kick-start weight loss.

According to the manufacturer, it has performed more than 20 clinical studies over a span of two decades, reportedly improving the wellbeing of patients suffering from weight-related conditions, including diabetes, arthritis and polycystic ovarian syndrome.

DAY 1

I am assigned a 21-day Nutridiet programme, which has been designed for rapid weight loss. Consisting of low calorie shakes and soups, my plan consists of five meals – or sachets – and I can decide which flavours to go for everyday.

I receive five flavours in my package: vanilla, strawberry, chocolate, chicken soup and vegetable soup. To prepare, all you have to do is add water to the shaker (or hot water to a mug or bowl) and mix in a sachet.

Needless to say, it's actually nice to be able to have all my meals sorted for the coming few days. No meal prep or cooking to worry about! Day 1 goes by quickly and I don't feel hungry at all.

DAY 3

So far so good. During Day 2, I did have a throbbing headache, but it passed thanks to a couple of Advil. But still, I'm not feeling hungry. The secret could be down to the product's magic formula – the powders are made of soy protein, so you constantly feel full.

DAY 7

By now, I have established a routine and getting used to the quick preparation of all the drinks. And best of all, I am down 5 pounds.

DAY 10

Oops, cheated today. One of my friends was hosting a birthday dinner, so I had a hearty meal of steak, mash potatoes and spinach. But I'm not going to feel bad about it.

DAY 14

By Day 14, I'm definitely feeling lighter and enjoying how my jeans are fitting. I am down another 2 pounds from the previous week, bringing my total weight loss to 7 pounds.

DAY 18

By now, I have reduced the shakes/soups to breakfast and dinner only. And now I have a salad for lunch.

DAY 21

At the end of the experiment, I am down 10 pounds! Whether the weight will stay off remains to be seen, but I like the fact that I did not feel hungry throughout the whole experience.

**5 MINUTES WITH****Peter Ekstedt**

CEO of Swedish Health & Nutridiet spokesperson

We've noticed that a day's meal plan comes to about 60g carbs, which is quite a high ratio compared to the other macronutrients. Many nutritionists would recommend a very low carb – or ketogenic diet – of 25-35g of carbs per day for rapid weight loss. Can you explain Nutridiet's reasoning behind this?

The answer is very simple – Nutridiet is not ketogenic diet or a low carb-high fat (LCHF) diet, and should therefore not be compared as such. Nutridiet is a low calorie diet. The rationale behind this [programme] is to keep calorie intake to a minimum while still obtaining your recommended daily intake of everything your body needs, such as vitamins, minerals, proteins and carbohydrates.

As you can see, I'm not an advocate of LCHF diets, as I do not consider carbohydrates harmful in the right amount. On the contrary, they are needed in your body to function and it is especially important to help your muscles absorb proteins.

Why are you using fructose as a sweetener? Some dieters would question why something like Stevia isn't being used instead.

Your question on fructose is very valid. Nutridiet uses some fructose as a sweetener to reach the required carbohydrates, and I think you would agree that fructose is not in any way a harmful substance, as it is found in every fruit on the planet. It is rather the high concentration version of it that causes a problem. It has rightfully received lots of bad publicity as a driver of obesity, but I want to stress that these discussions are often centred around products such as sodas, soft drinks, juices and canned fruits, where the amount of fructose is very high – it can be towards 30g in just one can, for instance. This is a very high density of calories without providing any of the other important nutrients, therefore creating an unbalanced amount of specific macronutrients. We justify the use of fructose in Nutridiet as we use a balanced amount of the product, in combination with other nutrients, minerals, fibres and protein.

Your recommendation to use stevia is interesting; Nutridiet's owners do have products with stevia in them but not in the shakes. I will talk to the developers about this when I meet them next time in Norway.

For more information, visit nutridiet.ae.