

What is a total diet replacement programme?

A total diet replacement programme consists of:

- a period of Total Diet Replacement (TDR) with low-energy energy products,
- regular behavioural support.

A period of Total Diet Replacement (TDR)

During a period of TDR ALL foods are replaced with specially formulated low-energy food replacement products, such as soups, shakes and bars, which if used as directed, provide 800kcal–1200kcal/day and all essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals required for good health. People must also be encouraged to consume an additional 1.5 litres of fluid (water or other no-calorie beverages, such as diet soft drinks). An over the counter fibre supplement (e.g. fybogel or benefiber) is often helpful to help prevent constipation. It is not usually recommended that individuals undertake a period of TDR for longer than 12 weeks, though in some trials participants continued for up to 20 weeks.

Food re-introduction phase

During the re-introduction phase, 'normal' food is gradually reintroduced over several weeks and the use of the formula food products declines proportionately. By the end of this phase, participants' will be consuming a self-selected diet consisting predominantly of 'normal' foods.

Behavioural support

Support is usually provided in meetings with a trained counsellor or health professional who can provide behavioural support for weight loss on a regular basis, together with advice on the formula food products and the reintroduction of food to achieve a healthy eating pattern. Some commercial providers offer telephone support or group meetings as well as individual face to face sessions.

How important is the behavioural support component?

Very important. People may be aware that low-energy formula TDR products can be purchased without the behavioural support component but the recent trials which showed the effectiveness of this approach provided behavioural support in combination with a low-energy TDR.

Will people regain weight when the programme ends?

Any period of weight loss is frequently followed by some weight regain, at least for a proportion of people. There is no evidence that the rate of weight regain is greater after a TDR programme than any other form of dieting. To reduce the risk of regaining weight we recommend that people weigh themselves regularly, daily or weekly, and return to the TDR for 1–4 weeks



if weight increases by more than 2 kg from the end of the TDR phase. Some people find it helpful to continue to replace a usual meal with one of the formula food products to reduce the risk of weight regain.

How can patients access TDR programmes?

In a very limited number of areas, mostly in Scotland, TDR programmes may be offered as part of specialist obesity services. However, most patients interested in undertaking a TDR weight loss programme will need to arrange this privately.

They can get information on cost and local availability of counsellors by contacting one of the providers of TDR programmes in the UK:

- Cambridge Weight Plan Ltd
www.cambridgeweightplan.com
- LighterLife, UK
www.lighterlife.com
- Counterweight Plus Programme
www.counterweight.org/Programmes/Counterweight-Plus-115
- Optifast Weight Loss Programme
www.optifast.co.uk
- PronoKal
www.pronokal.co.uk

People on certain medication will need to discuss with their doctor how to adjust their medication when they start these programmes. See our FAQs for more detail.



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