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**The Miraculous Claims of the Zone Diet**

**By Iulia Pascanu**

**The Miraculous Claims of the Zone Diet**

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One way of recognizing a fad diet is said to be the promise of multiple miraculous effects upon health. And Zone diet promises a lot.

"Why is the Zone diet so controversial?"

"Beats me!"

Extract from an interview with Dr. Barry Sears, by Harper&Collins Publishers

Five cover promises

At first glance, Barry Sears' first published book "Enter The Zone" has the following main points: Lose weight permanently Reset your genetic code Prevent disease Achieve your maximum physical performance Enhance your mental productivity

These five statements should make us buy. I think I would buy if only one of them were true, point three, preventing disease.

How can a diet not be controversial when it says it can "prevent diseases"? But, to be fair, Dr Sears provides further details of his ambiguous statement somewhere between the covers of the bestseller. We find out that Zone diet can help to: prevent type II diabetes, as Zone diet is nothing more than permanent and accurate insulin control through food we ingest prevent cardiovascular diseases (cardiomyopathy, arthritis, arteriosclerosis, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia) prevent or cure "mental diseases" such as depression and alcoholism restore energy in conditions such as CMS, PMS or even HIV infections prevent cancer development and make antibodies fight tumors with greater success.

## The Miraculous Claims of the Zone Diet

I really want to believe Zone can be that magic recipe that can help me live a longer and healthier life, without too much effort. But I expected some scientific proof for all these promises. And what did I find instead? Some stories about people who successfully solved their problems by following Zone diet, and their everlasting gratitude to diet guru Barry Sears! I'm sorry, but I'm not buying that.

Of course, there are some good aspects of the Zone diet. It promotes healthy eating standards and gives some common-sense advice. Somewhere, on the publishing road (more precisely with "Omega RX Zone --- The miracle of high-dose fish oil"), Dr. Sears advises us not to make any radical change in our dietary program without consulting a trained physician.

But I think there are still many things that need to be proven in the Zone. If it really does work the way it promises, mankind should go beyond such problems as illness.

Iulia Pascanu writes for

where you can find more information about

the Zone Diet.

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### **Is Zone Diet a Fad?**

**By Iulia Pascanu**

Health Castle offers "Ten signs of a fad diet":

1. It promises massive weight loss (1 – 2 lbs per week)

Dr. Barry Sears is careful when he declares a standard weight loss on Zone diet. He considers that anything between 1 to 1,5 lbs per week is satisfactory. "It will be impossible to lose more than one to one point five pounds of fat per week. Anything over that is loss of retained water", says Sears himself on his daily "Ask Dr. Sears" column at

. FAD.

2. It does not suggest you that you consult with a registered dietician or nutritionist

"Any change in diet (for better or worse) will affect the metabolism of the drug(s) you are taking. Always consult with a physician before starting the Zone Diet or any other dietary plan", says Dr. Sears in various interviews and discussion lists. Not FAD.

3. It encourages you to eliminate certain food groups (e.g. "low carb diets", "low fat diets")

## The Miraculous Claims of the Zone Diet

This is untrue for the Zone diet. Dr. Sears says: "No food is forbidden in the Zone." Zone diet considers "unfavourable" mostly high glyceemic foods and foods high in saturated fats. Not FAD.

### 4. It offers rigid menus

Difficult-to-prepare meals, plenty of measuring and counting, rules that are easy to misinterpret, Zone subscribes to that. FAD

### 5. It neglects active living or lifestyle changes

The Zone diet has impressive instrumentary and regulation for dining out or for fast food. On the other hand, there's no problem if you step out of the Zone now and then. Here are some soothing phrases from Dr. Sears himself: "The Zone diet is free of guilt" or "The Zone is just one meal away". I'm quite UNDECIDED about this one. It is clear the man has taken some time to think about it.

### 6. It harshly limitates the daily calorie intake

Some dieticians claim that the Zone diet limits the daily calorie intake to somewhere around 800. I used the calculator at

to check this (I am a 100 pound woman by the way) and my daily

calorie intake resulted around 1100 kcal. I'm not pleased with it, as I don't plan to spend my days in permanent hibernation, or lose any of my precious, hard-gained pounds... FAD.

### 7. It contradicts what most trusted health professionals say

The Zone diet argues against the USDA food pyramid, which recommends grains and starches up to five servings per day. This is its most high-profile argument. The American Heart Association considers Zone "a fad diet". FAD

### 8. It depends on special products, supplements and treatments

One Zone bar (or shake) is \$2.50. A 45-day supply bottle of Omega Rx concentrated fish oil is \$78.15. The figure for the Zone books ranges between \$6 and \$26 (at the Zone Labs online shop); FAD.

### 9. It makes miraculous claims

The Zone will help you to: lose up to 1.5 lbs body fat per week improve your insulin level (which should particularly be ... "not too high not too low") fight against "modern diseases" such as type II diabetes and blood vessel affections fight against "mental illnesses" such as depression and alcoholism

prevent "certain" cancers "restore energy", says Dr. Sears in his book, Enter the Zone, "especially if

you have CMS, PMS or even HIV infection" and... The Zone itself is defined as a state of well-being in

## The Miraculous Claims of the Zone Diet

which you do not experience hunger, fatigue or moodiness. Your body and mind function sharply at their "peak level".

The Zone is a FAD diet in this respect.

10. It relies on testimonials and success stories rather than scientific proof

Dr. Sears says "Let me be a little more specific about the rewards you'll reap from staying in the Zone" ("Enter the Zone", p. 4). A few paragraphs later he tells the happy stories of Steve Courson (a famous National Football League player in the late 1970's), his teammate John Corb and Dr. Chris Kyriazis, head of European Marketing for IBM. I believe these examples are not specific but unusual. Moreover, Dr. Sears' Zone diet is mistrusted by most dieticians and nutritionists as so far he has not published any relevant, professional research to sustain his theory. FAD again.

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