

Diet pills cause more harm to women than weight loss

by Jennifer Corn

Debbie was a pretty girl with big sparkling, blue eyes, golden hair, and a smile that could brighten anyone's day. She was smart, fun, and loved by all her friends.

Yet, Debbie had a low image of herself because she felt her figure was inadequate because she was far from looking like Christy Brinkley.

A year ago, Debbie believed she found a cure for her problem. Her miracle drug was amphetamines, prescribed to her by her doctor.

Debbie, like many people, did not take the amphetamines as they were prescribed. In less than a month after beginning her use of amphetamines, she began to increase her dose as her tolerance to the drug strengthened. Debbie's misuse of amphetamines ultimately led to tragedy. At the age of 23, she suffered a stroke that paralyzed the right side of her body. Her eyes have lost their sparkle and her smile is now crooked.

Though her figure is unchanged, Debbie no longer places such an emphasis on the shape of her body because she is now too busy learning to overcome her physical handicap.

In our society, there are many forms of weight reduction aids. One form, diet pills, comes in various forms, such as amphetam-

ines, diuretics, thyroid compounds, and nonprescription drugs containing amphetamine-like agents such as phenylpropanolamine.

They are all publicized as quick and easy weight loss tools; however, they can have serious effects on their users and can even cause death.

Amphetamines were synthesized in 1927 and since then have become a means of weight reduction for a growing number of the population, especially women.

In this country alone, it was estimated that about 8 billion doses of amphetamines are manufactured a year.

This amount would keep every man, woman, and child high on "speed" for a total of 6 weeks.

Because the body becomes tolerant to the effects of amphetamines, after just a few weeks of use the drug actually fails to cause any weight reduction.

Amphetamines also promote a gradual increase of insulin in the body. Insulin prevents the body's fat-stores from being broken down. Amphetamines actually work against weight loss.

Amphetamines have been known to be highly addictive, speed the heart rate, raise blood pressure, and cause serious mental illness and death.

Amphetamines may speed up the aging process and are responsible for the growing

cases of strokes among young people.

Some doctors have observed that the post-high depression that follows the use of amphetamines is one of the leading causes of suicides in this society.

Diuretics and thyroid compounds are also used for quick and easy weight loss.

Diuretics, or water pills, promote the excretion of water from the body. They have no effect on the body's fat-stores.

Diuretics may cause temporary weight loss, but a drop on the scale reflects only loss of water weight.

The user's weight will return to its original amount as soon as the diuretics are discontinued.

Thyroid compounds speed up the metabolic rate, and in some cases, can cause more harm than good.

Unless one suffers from a low thyroid function, these compounds are not beneficial.

For the normal, healthy user, thyroid compounds can cause hyperthyroid symptoms like diarrhea, irritability, and an abnormal heart rhythm.

There are nonprescription diet pills. Most of these have the active agent phenylpropanolamine. This is an amphetamine-related drug that is commonly found in nasal decongestant and cold medicines.

Phenylpropanolamine is known to reduce

the appetite and dull the sense of smell and taste. A quick study of over-the-counter diet pills, shows that the majority of diet pills contained .75 mg. of phenylpropanolamine while others contained 50 mg. Their packages included warnings to people suffering from heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and thyroid disease. There are also warnings addressed to pregnant women and children under the age of 18. Phenylpropanolamine has been known to cause heart palpitations, high blood pressure, and insomnia.

All of these drugs are highly commercialized to promote quick and easy weight loss; however, doctors have proved that users can regain even double the weight lost while using these various diet pills.

These drugs are dangerous. Unfortunately, they are widely misused by the public. They can be good crutches in fighting hunger, but their side-effects can cause much greater discomfort than hunger.

Even with their dangers, the FDA has been reluctant to remove them from the market but may do so in the future.

Will there ever be a miracle drug that will cause people to lose weight? It is doubtful. The only true way to lose weight safely is through dieting and exercise. To do this successfully, it must be done naturally and under the care of a physician.



Deliveries from area florists descended on Johnson Hall last week as the usual flood of roses arrived for Valentine's Day.

Hicks announces New York fashion/merchandising visit

Dr. Diane Hicks of the Department of Home Economics at Meredith has announced an off-campus program in New York City for undergraduate and continuing education students in design, retailing and merchandising. The New York Fashion/Merchandising Visit is scheduled for next May 15th to May 20th, Hicks said.

Participants will get a behind-the-scenes look at a variety of companies in the heart of the U.S. fashion industry and learn about fashion career opportunities.

The program will include guided tours of the showrooms and workrooms of apparel and fashion accessories manufacturers. Students will view the latest designs, and hear insiders discuss the development of the new designs. At such famous department stores as Macy's and Bloomingdale's as well as trendy boutiques, students will see at first-hand how new merchandise is presented in exciting ways to potential customers.

Members of the group will visit extensive fashion collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute and at the

Fashion Institute of Technology to discover the historical backgrounds of many "new" fashion inspirations, Hicks said. "The New York Fashion/Merchandising Visit is carefully designed to broaden students' understanding of past, current and future trends in the industry in which they plan to make careers," Hicks explained.

The program is being arranged to Hicks' specifications through Campus/New York company whose fashion consultant is Florence Lentz, a former fashion editor of SEVENTEEN Magazine. For 15 years the fashion director for Burlington Industries, Mrs. Lentz is now Fashion Placement Director of the Berkeley Schools and a member of the F.I.T. faculty.

During their New York stay, students will be given ample time for sight-seeing and shopping. They will also attend evening performances of two Broadway plays during their visit.

Interested students can reach Dr. Hicks in her office in 110-A of Hunter on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12-2pm.