

THE INSIGHT ON THE MEAT - NATURAL BEAUTY - DRINKING TIP

VEGETARIAN

A Taste of Italy

THE HOTTEST CHOP
In the northwestern states, these are the recipes.

HOWIN SAME PEOPLE DO CRAZY THINGS

BONUS!
How to Cut Your Cancer Risk Right Now



Simple Living
The new Earth-friendly Decorating



Losing Weight On the Web

The Internet has forever changed the way we live, shop and even meet a mate. Now it's changing the way we battle the bulge, too. A slew of online diet companies are offering 24-hour support and advice from nutritionists, fitness counselors and, through chat rooms and message boards, fellow dieters.

Some of the biggest players include eDiets.com, DietWatch.com and DietSmart.com. All boast a paying customer base of more than 300,000, made up mostly of 20- to 40-year-old women who like the convenience and anonymity—no meetings to rush to, no one passing judgment on setbacks or binges.

Lisa Drayer, M.A., R.D., DietWatch's eCounseling program director, says a "warm, caring community" not only motivates her clients but keeps them coming back. Case in point: For more than a year, she has had daily chats with one client who has lost a remarkable 97 pounds. "Before coming to DietWatch, I was skeptical. I thought nutritional counseling could only work face-to-face. I stand corrected," she says.

Losing weight on the Web is also cheaper. Compared to conventional programs—which often require, say, a \$20 enrollment fee, \$40 a month for meetings, plus the cost of food—online fees are nominal. Most run \$10 to \$15 a month.

Merilee Kern, marketing manager for eDiets, attributes its success to the high speed of Internet communication and



affordable, personalized plans. "The Internet lets us give them what they demand: personalized diet plans, privacy and convenience," Kern says.

New members fill out a questionnaire about weight-loss goals, exercise habits and food preferences. Their answers produce a customized weekly meal plan designed to help them lose 1 to 2 pounds a week. A few services, including eDiets and DietWatch, can accommodate vegetarians.

Do they work? In a study by Brown University, Internet dieters lost an average of 9 pounds and 2.5 inches from their waist in three months. As with any weight-loss plan, however, consult your healthcare practitioner before signing up.