

Here Comes The (Skinny) Bride

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In case you hadn't noticed, it's now officially spring! Kids are enjoying Spring Break from school, the birds are starting to sing, flowers are pushing up through the earth, and everything is wonderful.....unless you're one of the thousands of women planning a spring wedding!

Spring / early summer is the most popular time for weddings. But no matter when you're planning your wedding, the stress can be overwhelming! The average cost of a wedding in The United States is over \$22,000. About \$7,630 of that is spent on the wedding reception (source: American Wedding Study, 2002). From increasing costs to angry relatives to the never-ending guest list, a wedding brings stress and frustration for the bride.

Unfortunately, we often resort to binge eating and 'comfort foods' during times of stress, which of course puts on the pounds and creates even more stress! "I bought WHAT size wedding dress?!?!"

Approximately 7 out of every 10 brides crash diet or starve prior to their wedding date (source: www.fresnoweddings.net). Fitness experts know that CRASH DIETS AND STARVATION DIETS ARE THE WORST THING WE CAN DO! "If you crash-diet, you run the risk of comprising your health ... so that your hair, skin, nails don't look good for your big day or in the wedding pictures. If you want to lose weight before your wedding, look for a balanced eating plan" (source: Suzanne Henson, coordinator of the University of Alabama-Birmingham's EatRight Weight Management Program).

So what's a blushing bride to do if she has only six weeks until her wedding, and the stress is building up faster than the potluck table at church? There is hope.....

First of all, **START EXERCISING NOW**. It's crunch time, and while the old 30-minutes per day, 3 times per week may work for the general public it's probably not enough for the bride. Shoot for 30-minutes per day, six days per week. Be sure to include both cardio and resistance training so you'll get some muscle tone while you're burning fat.

Second, banish all high-fat junk food from the house. Be strong! You can do this! No Twinkies, no bacon, no chocolate cream pie. Eat plenty of lean protein (skinless chicken breast, fish, etc.) and absolutely **PIG OUT** on fresh vegetables! Drink plenty of water, and in all cases avoid the empty calories found in soda, alcohol and that sweet kids juice.

Finally, be wary of the weight-loss 'tricks' that you'll hear from your girlfriends. There is no magic pill that will make you a size 6 by the wedding, so don't experiment. Don't starve yourself because that will make you grumpy, make you retain fat, eliminate muscle tone, and set you up for failure. Don't listen to the gossip about the newest 'cabbage diet' or 'grapefruit diet' or 'Hollywood diet'. Instead, stick with a balanced diet and exercise.....this is the **ONLY** proven way to lose fat and look your best.

Two more bits of advice for the bride: Eat breakfast the morning of your wedding day - 8 out of every 10 brides don't eat breakfast (source: www.fresnoweddings.net) which will only make you miserable and weak during the reception! Most importantly, remember that he knew exactly what you looked like when he proposed to you, and he still proposed! He loves you the way you are, and all these fears about size and weight and unfounded anyway!

Relax, enjoy yourself, and make the lifestyle changes that will bring results. Have a great wedding!

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Tracie Johanson is the founder of Pick Up The Pace, a 30-minute exercise studio for women, focusing on fitness, health and nutrition for maximum weight loss. Please visit <http://www.letspickupthepace.com> for more information.