

## Diet Myths

There is a lot of information and misinformation out there regarding what constitutes a good diet. Some of that information can hinder your progress and in some cases can even hurt you. Following are some of the common diet myths.

### *Fat is the enemy*

Fat is essential for your body to run properly. Fat lubricates joints and it also regulates hormonal activity. Cholesterol is also necessary because along with fat, it help regulates hormones. Both fat and cholesterol help build and maintain cells in your body.

The problem is not fat and cholesterol, the problem is eating way the wrong fat and cholesterol in quantities than your body need to perform these functions. Around 30% of your calories should come from fat.

### *Skipping Meals to Lose Weight:*

The worst thing you can do is skip a meal! When you skip a meal your body goes into survival mode. Cnsequently, two things happen: When you finally do eat, you will eat too much and your body will store everything you ate as an hedge against future starvation.

Your body will slow down your metabolism so you do not need as many calories to survive. It does this by metabolizing your muscles. People that only eat once or twice a day will lose a little weight because their bodies are metabolizing muscle but then their metabolism slows down and the weight loss stops and they have lost muscle which will make it even harder for them to continue to lose weight than when they first started.

### *Do not eat late at night:*

It does not matter when you eat. What matters in your diet is what you eat and how much you eat. Calories in -vs- calories out are what produce a weight loss or a weight gain. If you want to have a snack in the evening then make sure you budgeted for it from a caloric standpoint. If you know that you are having a late dinner, make sure not to eat too much during the day so even with a late dinner you are still within the range for calorie intake.

*High Protein / Low Carb Diets are healthy:*

Our Bodies are hard wired to run on carbs as our primary energy source. Since our bodies are wonderful machines, instead of just shutting down, our bodies will take what you give it (protein) and they use it to perform the roles that carbohydrates do within the body. However this process leads to unwanted by-products in your body and they can have a negative affect on your health.

The long-term health effects of a high-protein/low-carbohydrate diet are unknown. But getting most of your daily calories from high-protein foods like meat, eggs, and cheese is not a balanced eating plan. You may be eating too much fat and cholesterol, which may raise heart disease risk. You may be eating too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which may lead to constipation due to lack of dietary fiber.

Following a high-protein/low-carbohydrate diet may also make you feel nauseous, tired and weak. Eating fewer than 130 grams of carbohydrate a day can lead to the buildup of ketones (partially broken-down fats) in your blood. A buildup of ketones in your blood (called ketosis) can cause your body to produce high levels of uric acid, which is a risk factor for gout: (when your joints swell).

Ketosis may be especially risky for pregnant women and people with diabetes or kidney disease caused due to overwork of that critical organ.

You should not have to eliminate an entire class of food from the diet in order to lose weight. Eating a balanced diet that includes carbs (veggie and starch and grains) protein and fat will allow you to have a wide variety of foods as well as help you lose weight safely.

Quitting smoking makes you gain weight:

What makes you gain weight is probably replacing one oral fixation with another (food for smoking). People also eat for comfort when they feel a craving for a smoke. Quitting smoking does not cause weight gain. People's coping mechanisms (most often food) lead to the weight gain. You do not have to eat more when you quit smoking and some do not. Most people however replace one habit with another so the perception is that if you quit smoking, you get fat.

*Do not eat nuts & legumes because they are high in fat:*

Nuts and legumes are high in unsaturated fats, which are the heart healthy fat. They are high in protein and will keep you full for longer than other snacks. There are many studies that show dieters who consume nuts and legumes regularly lose more weight than those who do not. Eat only unsalted versions of Cashew nuts or Peanuts.

*Stay away from red meat if you want to lose weight:*

While it is good to limit your intake of red meat to a couple of servings a week, you do not need to cut it out entirely. Red meat provides great levels of Zinc, Iron and Protein. Choose lean cuts and limit your portion size depending on how many calories you want to take in.

*Eat three meals a day and no snacks:*

Three square meals in your diet is better than nothing, but if you want to optimize your metabolism then you should aim for 5-6 smaller meals/snacks a day. Try to eat every 2-3 hours to avoid over eating. When you eat, your body releases insulin. Insulin tells your

body to store what you have eaten. The more insulin released when you eat, the more calories your body will store. By eating smaller meals more often, you ensure that the amount of insulin released is smaller, therefore you do not store as many of the calories you take in.

It means space your meals and snacks out so you never go too long without eating. If you do not want to eat more than 1800 calories a day in your diet, then you need to divide that number by 5 or six instead of 3. If you go over on one meal, go under on another to balance it out.

*Avoid all starchy food:*

Foods like bread, pasta, beans, cereals, fruits, yams and potatoes are low in calories and fat. It is what we put on these foods that are bad for us: High fat dressings, thick sauces, sour cream, etc? These foods are valuable sources of energy; just remember to control your portions!

*Dairy Products are unhealthy:*

Dairy products contain many nutrients we need like calcium, vitamin D and protein. Dairy products also contain something called conjugated linoleic acid. CLA has been shown to aid in weight loss. Skim dairy products do not have this in it as the skimming process removes it. Again, all things can be had in moderation. One serving a day in your diet will provide more health benefits for you than any negative effects.

*Avoid fruits if you want to lose weight:*

Followers of this theory will tell you that fruit has so much sugar that you should not eat it if you are serious about losing weight. Some fruits do have more sugar in them than others. For instance, bananas have more sugar than apples. Understand this: No one has ever become fat or unhealthy because they ate a diet high in fruits.

Understand that by cutting fruit from a diet temporarily to hasten weight loss, you are denying your body countless vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that it needs for healthy function. If you are concerned about sugar in your diet, then you should cut out cola sodas, processed fruit juices. Cutting those will help you greatly and processed fruit juices do not have that much vitamin content anyway.

*Always buy fat free/ reduced fat foods:*

Just because a food has little or no fat does not mean it is good for you. Calories are what is important and many of these foods just add sugar in place of fat. Many fat free foods actually have more calories than their normal counterparts. Read the nutrition label before you buy to make sure that you are not getting a fat free calorie bomb!

*Some Foods actually burn fat:*

You may have heard that certain foods (celery, grapefruit) actually burn fat. No food can burn fat!!! The best you can do is eat something that speeds up your metabolism (anything with caffeine in it)

Now that you have the truth about these myths you can make educated decisions about how you will change your diet so you can stay healthy for the rest of your life.