

TOP 10 DIET MYTHS

"A myth is something a lot of people believe because they want to believe it, not because it is based on fact."

Warm-up activity: Work in pairs. Read the following myths concerning nutrition. Why are they not true? Explain.

a. Cholesterol is bad for you, low or zero-fat diets are good for you.

b. Vegetarians can't build muscle.

c. Low-fat milk has less calcium than full-fat milk.

d. Bananas are fattening.

e. Crash dieting or fasting makes you lose weight.

f. Fattening foods make for rapid weight gain.

g. A slow metabolism prevents weight loss.

h. You always gain weight when you stop smoking.

i. Low-fat foods help you lose weight.

j. Food eaten late at night is more fattening.

Reading: Skim through the following paragraphs. Match them with the myths above.

Myth 1: _____

Fact

Cholesterol is a fatty substance that is made mostly by the liver. We all need some blood cholesterol as it's used to build cells and make vital hormones - and there's good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. Saturated fats found in food like meat, cheese, cream, butter and pastries tend to raise LDL (low density lipoprotein) cholesterol - known as 'bad' cholesterol - and this delivers cholesterol to the arteries. HDL (high density lipoprotein) - or 'good' cholesterol - transports cholesterol away from the arteries, back to the liver.

Myth 2: _____

Fact

This can be true in the short term but it can have negative side effects on cholesterol levels. Losing weight over the long term burns off fat, and crash

dieting or fasting not only removes fat but also lean muscle and tissue. It can also make you feel dizzy or weak so it's much better to try long term weight loss.

Myth 3: _____

Fact

Many diets tell you not to eat after a certain time in the evening in the belief that the body will store more fat because it is not burned off with any activity. However, a study revealed large meals eaten late at night do not make the body store more fat - it's the total amount eaten in a 24-hour period that's important.

It is true that people who skip meals during the day, then eat loads in the evening are more likely to be overweight than those who eat regularly throughout the day. This may be because eating regular meals helps people regulate their appetite and overall food intake.'

Myth 4: _____

Fact

Vegetarians can be equally as muscular as meat eaters by getting their protein from vegetable products like nuts, pulses and grains.

You need protein to build muscle but too much can lead to long-term side effects, like putting the kidney under too much pressure. The body can only store a certain amount of protein, too much can damage the kidney.

Myth 5: _____

Fact

This is a common myth among overweight people trying to manage their weight. Studies have shown that resting metabolism, which is the number of calories used by the body at rest, increases rather than decreases as people become fatter. In other words, the larger you are, the more calories you burn off. Weight gain occurs when the number of calories eaten is greater than the number used up by the body. Unfortunately, people are becoming increasingly sedentary, burning off less and less calories, and it seems likely this is a crucial factor in the increasing numbers struggling to control their weight.

Myth 6: _____

Fact

Believe it or not, true weight gain is a slow process. You need to eat an extra 3500 calories to gain one pound of body fat (and vice versa for losing it).

If the scales say you've gained a few pounds after a meal out, it's largely due to fluid, which will resolve itself - as long as you don't get fed up, and keep overeating! A lot of people feel guilty and think they've blown their diet if

they eat rich foods. But, how can a chocolate bar make you instantly put on pounds? Balance high fat foods with healthy food and activity for long term weight control.

Myth 7: _____

Fact

Skimmed and semi-skimmed milk actually have more calcium, because the calcium is in the watery part, not the creamy part. If you're trying to lose weight and cut fat from your diet, skimmed milk is your best bet because not only is it lower in fat but it also has more calcium than full fat milk. Semi-skimmed is best for maintaining a healthy lifestyle if you're not dieting. Full-fat milk is best for children and adults who are underweight.

Myth 8: _____

Fact

'Low-fat' or 'fat-free' doesn't necessarily mean low calorie or calorie-free. Check the calorie content of foods, especially cakes, biscuits, crisps, ice creams and ready meals. Extra sugars and thickeners are often added to boost flavour and texture, so calorie content may be only a bit less, or similar to standard products. A low-fat food should contain no more than 3g fat per 100g. And watching the quantity is important. People tend to have half-fat spread but then use twice as much. And things like fruit pastilles may be low in fat but are high in sugar which turns to fat. So in low fat foods, look to see where else the calories might come from.

Myth 9: _____

Fact

When people stop smoking, some gain weight, some lose and some stay the same. It's far healthier to be an overweight non-smoker than not to bother giving up because you think you'll put on weight. Where people tend to fall down is when they replace a cigarette with comfort food. Chewing sugar-free gum or snacking on vegetable strips kept in the fridge is a good idea as you can have these instead of reaching for the biscuit tin.

Myth 10: _____

Fact

They are actually low in fat. There is only half a gram of fat and 95 calories in a banana. Not only that but they are packed with potassium, come in their own packaging, are clean and very handy as a snack!



Translation: Divide into 3 groups. Find the following expressions in the text and write down their equivalents.

Myths 1 - 3

1. nasycené tuky
2. intenzivní držení diety
3. vedlejší účinky
4. způsobující tloušťnutí
5. ukládat tuk
6. spalovat tuky
7. vynechávat jídla
8. jíst velká kvanta
9. mít nadváhu
10. příjem potravy

Myths 4 - 6

1. luštěniny
2. zrní, obilí
3. poškodit ledviny
4. váhový úbytek
5. přírůstek na váze
6. sedavý
7. váha (na vážení)
8. cítit se provinile
9. porušit dietu
10. tabulka čokolády

Myths: 7 - 10

1. odstředěné mléko
2. snížit/omezit tuk ve stravě
3. udržovat si zdravý životní styl
4. být pod váhu
5. zhubnout
6. polotučná pomazánka
7. zahušťovadla
8. přibrat na váze
9. chudý na tuky
10. vhodný, užitečný

Comprehension questions: In your groups, answer the following questions.

Myths 1 - 3

1. What are the two types of cholesterol discussed in the article? What is the difference between them?
2. Which food are saturated fats found in?
3. What are the drawbacks of crash dieting?
4. Why is it not fattening to eat large meals late at night?

Myths 4 - 6

5. Which food do vegetarians get their protein from?
6. Which organ can be damaged due to too much protein?
7. Why do people burn off less and less calories nowadays?
8. How many extra calories do you have to eat to gain one pound of body fat?

Myths 7 - 10

- 9. Why do skimmed and semi-skimmed milk have more calcium than full-fat milk?
- 10. Which substances can increase the level of fat in a low-fat food?
- 11. In which cases might people actually gain weight when they stop smoking?
- 12. How many calories does a banana approximately contain?

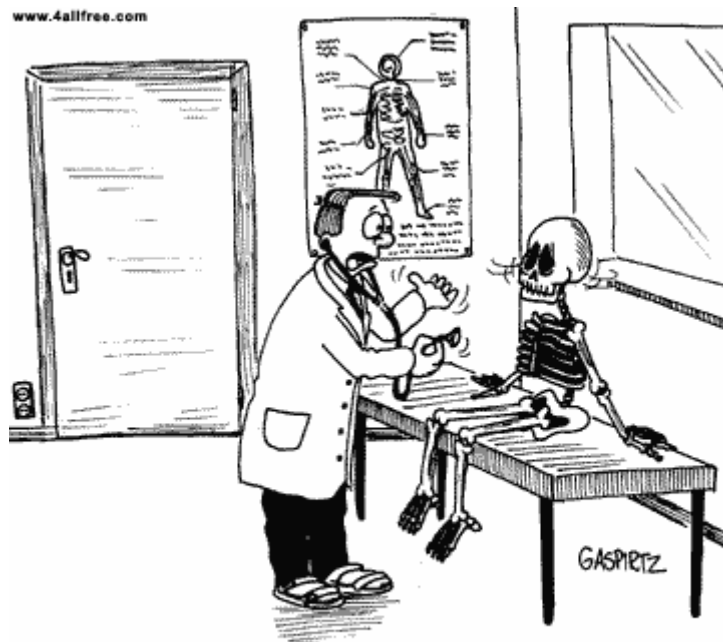
Discussion:

There are numerous other diet myths. Below are a few more examples. Read the myths and discuss them.

Dried fruit is not as healthy as fresh fruit.

Vegetarian foods are the healthier option.

What other diet myths do you know? Explain why they are not true.



And it never occurred to you that you might be overdoing your diet a little bit?