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Nutrition



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5 Dieting and Nutrition Myths Busted

Forget everything you've heard about dieting and nutrition as we bust 5 myths.

We all have one: A friend who seems to know all the latest fad diets and weight loss tips and tricks. The fact is, however, that there are many myths about how to go about eating and exercising. Here are five common dieting and nutrition myths debunked.

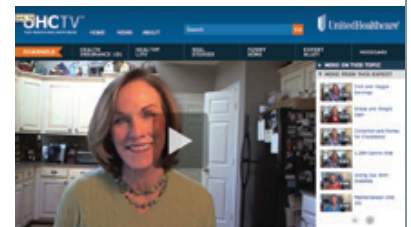
1 Myth: All fat is bad

Fact: Not all fats are bad fats.

Mono- and polyunsaturated fats are actually good for us. They can help increase our good cholesterol, help our hearts and may reduce inflammation. The bad fats you should eliminate from your diet are trans-fats and saturated fats. These are found in many processed foods that contain refined sugars. Foods rich in good fats are found in fish and plant-based foods like avocados, nuts and seeds. Simple ways to increase good fats in your diet are:

- Cook with canola, olive or sunflower oil
- Add a handful of nuts or seeds to your meals
- Eat fish twice a week

Pregnant women are advised to eat eight to 12 ounces of seafood each week. A mother's intake of omega-3s has been associated with positives for her baby. It may help with brain and eye development, for example. Just avoid tilefish, shark, swordfish and king mackerel. The mercury content in these fish is not safe for pregnant women. Although white albacore tuna contains less mercury, pregnant women should limit it to six ounces per week.



Video Spotlight:

[How to Read Food Labels](#)

[Vitamins and Minerals: How To Get What You Need](#)

[Best Tips for Health Weight Loss](#)

5 Dieting and Nutrition Myths Busted (continued)

2 Myth: Eliminate carbs and you'll lose weight

Fact: We all need carbohydrates or carbs because they are our body's fuel.

You may feel sluggish and tired without enough carbs. Government guidelines advise us to make fruit and vegetables half our plate at every meal. They also suggest you cut down on simple carbs and replace with unrefined carbs, such as:

- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole grain cereals
- Brown rice

Concentrate on foods with complex carbs like vegetables, fruits and whole grains instead of cutting out all carbs. Eliminate simple carbs that contain sugar. Choosing a diet that includes a variety of complex carbs also helps ensure you're eating foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber. So eat a ripe peach, a bunch of grapes or an apple.

3 Myth: Eating healthy costs too much

Fact: Eating healthy can actually cost less for a family of four.

If you buy organic, out-of-season or unusual fruits and vegetables, they can cost more per ounce. Fast food, restaurant meals and processed foods can be more expensive than eating at home. You can save money and eat healthier by:

- Preparing and cooking more meals at home
- Buying fruit and vegetables in-season
- Buying fruits and vegetables when they're on sale
- Buying in bulk
- Growing your own fruits and vegetables

4 Myth: I can eliminate calories by skipping meals

Fact: Skipping a meal, especially breakfast, has been shown to increase your chances of being overweight.

It's better to eat throughout the day, including healthy snacks between meals. Exchange an unhealthy snack with a healthier option instead of skipping a meal. Cutting out just 100 calories a day and increasing your activity level will do more for your health and weight than skipping a meal.

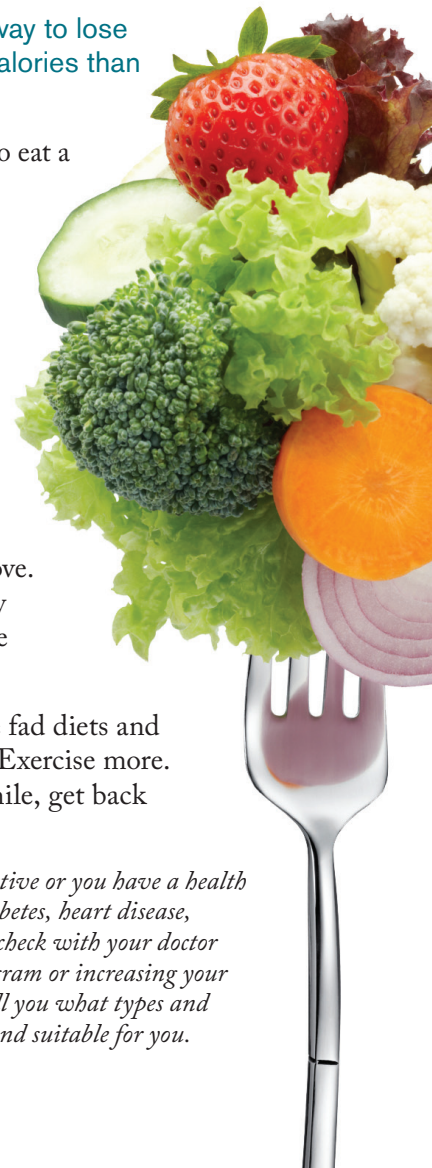
5 Myth: A low calorie diet is the only way to lose weight

Fact: The only sure-fire way to lose weight is to burn more calories than you take in.

The best way to do this is to eat a healthy range of foods and increase your physical activity level. Exercise doesn't mean you need to go to a gym or fitness center. It can be as simple as going for a walk, gardening or playing catch with your child or grandchild. Eat fewer empty calories a day and increase how much you move. Slowly but surely, pound by pound, you'll start to notice the difference.

The bottom line? Skip the fad diets and eat as healthy as you can. Exercise more. If you splurge once in awhile, get back on track the next day.

Note: If you are physically inactive or you have a health condition such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy or other symptoms, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program or increasing your activity level. He or she can tell you what types and amounts of activities are safe and suitable for you.



SOURCES:

- United States Department of Agriculture. Eating healthy on a budget: The consumer economics perspective. Accessed: 09/13/2013
 - National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Weight-control Information Network. Weight-loss and nutrition myths. Accessed: 10/15/2013
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats. Accessed: 10/15/2013
 - United States Department of Agriculture. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010. Accessed: 09/13/2013
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Keeping a Well-Stocked Kitchen: Cupboard Basics

Keeping your pantry stocked with healthy foods is the first step toward building solid eating habits.

Having plenty of healthy foods on hand is a great way to build a foundation for good eating habits that may last a lifetime. Do a pantry makeover and fill your kitchen with ingredients that may help the whole family develop healthy eating behaviors. Welcome fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy, seafood, lean meats and poultry to your kitchen and pantry. Experts recommend including these food groups in everyday diet.

Here are some tips on how to stock your kitchen to help you get into a healthy eating routine.

Fruits

Have fruit on hand in a variety of forms: fresh, frozen, canned, juice and dried. For example:

- Bananas
- Berries
- Melons
- Raisins
- Orange juice
- Apple juice



Check that the canned and frozen fruits and juices do not have added sugar.

Vegetables

Color and variety is key when it comes to vegetables. Variety will not only add different flavors, but also various nutrients. Try to stock vegetables in different forms such as fresh, frozen and canned. Make sure to buy frozen and canned vegetables without added salt or sugar. Here is a selection of veggies to try:

- Dark-green vegetables — spinach, broccoli, mustard greens and romaine lettuce
- Beans and peas — lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans and pinto beans
- Red and orange vegetables — red peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and winter squash
- Starchy vegetables — corn and green peas
- Others — green beans and onions

Whole Grains

Read food labels and keep an eye out for whole grains such as:

- Whole-grain cereals and crackers
- Whole-wheat bread
- Brown rice
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa

Keeping a Well-Stocked Kitchen: Cupboard Basics *(continued)*

Dairy

Choose products that are fat-free or low-fat.

- Yogurt
- Cheese, such as low-fat mozzarella
- Low-fat or fat-free milk
- Fortified soy beverages

Protein

Meat and poultry should be lean and low fat. Protein foods also include seafood (try salmon or anchovies), eggs and unsalted nuts and seeds. Beans and peas also have protein and can be included in your diet as either a veggie or a protein — but not both.

When cooking, replace butter with healthier oil, such as olive oil. You can also cook with low-sodium chicken broth. Use oil and vinegar to make a healthy salad dressing.

Once your kitchen is stocked with the basics, you can focus on healthy eating!



SOURCES:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Accessed: 09/09/2013
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Plan Balanced, Healthy Meals with MyPlate

America's longtime nutritional guide, the food pyramid, was replaced by a dynamic easy-to-follow program, Choose MyPlate.

Think about your dinner plate for a moment. Is it covered with meat and potatoes and little else? Do your vegetables make up the smallest spot on your plate? Do you often eat more than you should?

Your weight depends partially on your plate. Many factors may affect your weight. These include your physical activity level, genetics, your emotions and attitudes and your income, among others.

But your eating habits are also an important factor. Most of us haven't gotten this message. More than two-thirds of Americans 20 years and older are overweight or obese.

This puts most adults at risk for weight-related diseases. They can include:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Certain cancers
- Stroke

Understanding what makes up a healthy diet may help you maintain a healthy weight. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has provided Americans with healthy diet guidelines since 1916. Over

Plan Balanced, Healthy Meals with MyPlate *(continued)*

the past 20 years, the USDA's food pyramid was a familiar guide. Today, much has changed in American tastes, mobility, food availability and patterns of family life. What will help us remember what to eat and how much to eat? One answer: a program from the USDA called MyPlate, which in 2011 replaced the Food Guide Pyramid.

A simple approach

MyPlate helps you make healthier food choices. It uses a place setting, a familiar mealtime visual. It prompts you to think about building a healthy plate.

The place setting includes a plate divided into four parts. These represent different food groups. They are fruits, vegetables, grains and proteins. It also includes a circle to the side, representing dairy.

Here are some of the key messages:

- Make half of your plate fruits and veggies.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Compare the sodium in your foods, choosing foods with less sodium.

Spotlight on making better choices

MyPlate emphasizes positive lifestyle choices and recommends you:

- **Decrease portion sizes.** Use a smaller plate, glass or bowl. One cup of food on a small plate looks larger than on a big plate.
- **Focus on foods you need.** Eat your fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean protein and fat-free or low-fat dairy.
- **When eating out, make better choices.** Ask for dressings, syrups and sauces on the side. Skip foods listed on the menu as creamy, buttered, battered, breaded, fried or sautéed.



- **Cook at home more often.** If you don't already, start out cooking once a week at home. Then build up to cooking at home more often.
- **Eat fewer empty calorie foods.** This includes solid fats and foods and beverages with added sugar. These add calories but little or no nutrients.
- **Increase physical activity.** For healthy adults, this means at least two days of strength training and at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week. You may break your aerobic activity up into chunks of at least 10 minutes.
- **Decrease screen time.** Choose other options instead of watching TV. Take a walk, play with your dog, or garden.

More help

The USDA runs a free website with more information about the recommendations at ChooseMyPlate.gov. This site includes a SuperTracker plan that can be tailored to you. It also has sample menus and snack ideas.

SOURCES:

- United States Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate. Accessed: 08/09/2013
- United States Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate. Brief history of USDA guidelines. Accessed: 08/09/2013
- United States Department of Agriculture. ChooseMyPlate. Using MyPlate with MyPyramid. Accessed: 08/09/2013

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