

NUTRITION and WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

COMMON MYTHS SURROUNDING NUTRITION, WEIGHT LOSS AND EXERCISE



1. Eating fat makes us fat

Truth: Consuming too many calories and not burning enough through physical activity causes us to put on body fat! Good fats are essential in our diets for good health as they perform many functions. Good fats help us build healthy cell membranes, which help to protect us from diseases. Fat helps us make hormones and it is vital for proper brain developments. Importantly, it helps our bodies use Vitamins A,D,E and K which are fat soluble vitamins. Fat is more energy dense per gram than Carbs or Protein, (9 kcals per gram against 4 kcals per gram for Carbs and Protein), but this is not a reason to avoid it.

Saturated (meats and dairy) should be eaten in smaller quantities – Up to Approx. 10% of our daily 20 – 25% fat intake. Fat loss

TIP: Avoid hydrogenated / Trans fats if you are serious about health and fat loss. See section on fats above.

2. Eating after 8 p.m. causes us to gain weight

Truth: It does not matter what time of day we eat. It is **what** and **how much** you eat and **how much physical activity** you do during the whole day that determines whether you gain, lose, or maintain your weight. No matter when you eat, your body will store **extra calories** as body fat.

3. We can eat more foods if they are low fat or fat free

Truth: A low-fat or fat-free food does not mean calorie free! Or indeed that it is healthier! Often it is only slightly lower calories than the full fat equivalent. Often, the fat content may be lower, but the product has extra calories in form of sugar and carbohydrates and other additives and chemicals. These are often added to make the product more palatable. Don't be conned. Read the label!

4. We need to exercise for at least 45 minutes to get the full benefit

Truth: Physical activity does not need to be vigorous or for specific times e.g. 45 mins for it to be of benefit. Adults should engage in moderate intensity activity physical activities for at least 30

minutes, 5 x per week. These sessions can be cumulative. For example, 15 minutes walking in the morning and 15 minutes gardening in the afternoon is 30 minutes physical activity!

5. Skipping meals helps us to lose weight

Truth: People who regularly skip meals especially breakfast are often heavier and healthier than people who eat regularly throughout the day. Why? Firstly, our metabolism is slowed, the speed that your body processes energy / calories. Secondly, we get hungry and overeat in the evening and possibly add to this by making poor food choices. When we skip meals we are working against our body trying to lose weight.

Tip: 5-6 smaller meals per day is better to control appetite and fuel our body (burn calories)

6. Lifting weights is not good to do if you want to lose weight, because it will make you "bulk up."

Truth : Lifting weights or doing strengthening activities like push-ups and crunches on a regular basis can actually help you maintain or lose weight. These activities can help you build muscle, and muscle burns more calories than body fat. So if you have more muscle, you burn more calories—even sitting still. Doing strengthening activities 2 or 3 days a week will not "bulk you up." Only intense strength training, combined with a certain genetic background, can build very large muscles.

Tip: Try to do strengthening activities 2 to 3 days a week. You can:

- lift weights
- use large rubber bands (resistance bands)
- do push-ups or sit-ups
- do household or garden tasks that make you lift or dig
- Join a boot camp or circuits based exercise class
- Don't know what to do? Hire a Personal Trainer or Join a Gym

7. Sugar free fizzy drinks or low calorie drinks help us to lose weight

Truth: Many are full of chemicals and additives that are linked to fat gain and fat retention. If you don't know what or how the chemicals and additives in these drinks assist us, then AVOID!

8. Starches (Complex Carbohydrates) are fattening and should be avoided when trying to lose weight

Many foods high in starch are low in saturated and bad fats and calories such as:

- bread
- rice
- pasta
- cereals

- beans
- fruits
- some vegetables (like potatoes, sweet potatoes and yams)

The wholegrain, wholemeal or Brown varieties of Bread, Rice, Pasta are also LOW GLYCAEMIC INDEX (LOW G.I.), which means they release energy more slowly, stabilising blood sugar levels and keep us fuller for longer.

They become high in saturated fats or bad fats and calories when eaten in **large portion sizes** or when **covered with processed sauces, high-fat toppings like butter, sour cream, or mayonnaise**. Foods high in starch (complex carbohydrates) are an important source of energy for your body. The more energy we have, the more physically active we can be. It's about getting the balance right!

TIP: Eat Wholemeal Pasta, Brown Rice, Rye Bread and Sweet Potatoes for excellent choices of LOW GI Foods, rather than white pasta, white rice, wheat based bread or potatoes.

9. Eating Nuts, Seeds, Avocados, Nut Butters are fattening and should be avoided if you are trying to lose weight.

Truth: In small amounts, nuts, seeds, avocado pears and nut butters are part of a healthy weight-loss program. These foods are more energy dense at 9 calories per gram (i.e. the fat content of the food) However, most nuts, seeds, avocado pears, nut butters contain healthy fats that do not clog arteries. These are also good sources of protein, dietary fibre, Vitamins and minerals essential for good physical health.

Tip: Weigh out and bag small portions of nuts and seeds (25 grams is approx. 150 calories) and eat with a piece of fruit for a small meal/snack.

10. Performing loads of crunches will make us lose abdominal fat i.e. give us a defined muscular abdominals or a 'six pack'.

Truth: We cannot target specific areas for fat loss. I.e. Crunches for a 'six pack'. They will certainly help make the muscles, specifically the Rectus Abdominus muscles stronger. We lose body fat from all over the body not just in specific areas. To do this we must create a energy deficit, i.e. burn more calories than we consume. Six pack muscles can become visible when body fat levels are low, approx < 10% body fat.

