

The Top 7 Myths vs. Realities about Healthy Eating

Myth #7 – You should never eat fast food

Reality: You might be happy to know that healthier options are available today at most fast food restaurants. Burger joints are now offering more “grilled” or “roasted” items, fruit and vegetable side-orders, salads, whole-grain buns and low-fat yogurt desserts among other healthful choices. If you like fast food with a cultural flair, try soft corn tortilla tacos with chicken, diced tomatoes, salsa and cooked pinto beans, but opt to hold on the extra cheese and sour cream. Or perhaps choose chicken lo mein with steamed vegetables. Try choosing fruit juice, peanuts or frozen yogurt at the stop-n-go store.

Always remember to balance your eating plan by not relying on quick food service options too often.

Myth #6 – Starches are fattening

Reality: Not true. Complex carbohydrates, which include starches, are very healthy foods that are loaded with fiber, vitamins and minerals. Starches provide your body with energy. They are not high in calories, fat or cholesterol unless they're eaten in large amounts and prepared with high-fat ingredients like butter and mayonnaise. Potatoes, rice, pasta, bread, beans and certain vegetables (yams, squash, sweet potatoes, carrots, etc.) are all good examples of healthy starches.

Try to balance the number of starches you eat at meals with other less-starchy carbohydrates. For example: Instead of eating sweet potatoes, lima beans and cooked carrots at dinner, perhaps choose the sweet potato with some steamed broccoli and cauliflower.

Source:
American Diabetes Association

Myth #5 – Skipping meals makes you lose weight fast

Reality: Actually, the opposite can be true. While you might lower the number of calories you eat in a day, your body works less efficiently without food. Your energy gets zapped, your metabolism slows down and you miss important nutrients that your body needs to fight disease and stay well. Plus, you'll probably be hungrier by the next meal time, and you may be more inclined to overeat or make high-calorie/low-nutrient choices. Overeating and a slower metabolism can contribute to weight gain.

Try to eat regular meals that include 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables each day as well as a variety of nutritious choices from all the basic food groups. Eating high-fiber/low-fat meals and exercising 30-60 minutes most days of the week are very healthful ways to lose weight.

Sources:
National Cancer Institute - <http://www.5aday.gov>
Department of Agriculture - www.mypyramid.gov
www.nutrition.gov



Myth #4 – If you work out, you can eat whatever you want

Reality: Hold on there, champ! Eating plans can certainly differ based on how active you are and how intense your work out is. Professional athletes and construction workers pack a tremendous amount of physical activity into a day; but that doesn't mean they get to super-size any food they want. It means that their calorie requirements might be a little higher than for people who get only low-to-moderate levels of physical activity each day. To stay lean and healthy, it's best to choose the most nutrient-rich foods from the basic food groups every day, eat them in the right portions, and stay active.

Myth #3 – What you eat matters more than how much

Reality: Partially true. What you eat is just as important as how much you eat, how often you eat it and how you prepare it. Cheese is a great dairy food. But eating too much of it can add extra calories, fat, sodium and cholesterol. A healthy eating plan doesn't mean you have to eat like a rabbit. Choose a variety of nutritious foods every day. And enjoy your favorite treat once in a while in sensible portions.

Myth #2 – You have to lose a lot of weight to make a difference

Reality: Not true. Moderate weight loss can be very beneficial to your overall health. Studies have shown that losing 5-10% of your weight and keeping it off can help reduce blood pressure and cut your risk of heart disease and some cancers.

Myth #1 – Desserts are forbidden

Reality: Correction: Desserts are allowed! Try healthful choices like fruit salads, low-fat yogurt with fruit, sorbets, frozen fruit juice bars, angel food cake, and frozen yogurt.

Source:
Reader's Digest (online) – "7 Diet Misconceptions" -
<http://www.rd.com/healthy-living/health/weight-loss-7-diet-misconceptions/article.html>

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