

# Myths and Facts of Dieting

| MYTHS  | FACTS   |
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| 1. Fad diets work for permanent weight loss.   | <b>Fact:</b> Fad diets are not the best ways to lose weight and keep it off. These diets often promise quick weight loss, but this often happens by cutting out important nutrients from your diet.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> To safely lose weight, improve your eating habits and increase your physical activity.   |
| 2. Skipping meals is a good way to lose weight.  | <b>Fact:</b> Your body needs a certain amount of calories and nutrients each day. Skipping meals can cause increased snacking or overeating at the next meal.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Eat 3 small meals and 2-3 small snacks throughout the day that include a variety of nutritious, low fat, and lower calorie foods. Drink 8 glasses of water every day!  |
| 3. I can lose weight while I eat anything I want.  | <b>Fact:</b> It is <i>possible</i> to eat any kind of food you want and lose weight, but you still need to limit the amount of foods AND calories you eat on a daily basis.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Burn up more calories than you take in by being active and exercising.   |
| 4. Eating after 8 p.m. causes weight gain.   | <b>Fact:</b> It doesn't matter what time of day you eat. It is about how much you eat during the whole day and how much exercise you get that makes you gain or lose weight.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Try not to snack when doing other activities, like while watching television, playing video games, or using the computer.   |
| 5. Certain foods, like grapefruit, celery, or cabbage soup, can burn fat and make you lose weight. | <b>Fact:</b> No foods can burn fat.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> The best way to lose weight is to cut back on the number of calories you eat and increase your physical activity.  |
| 6. Nuts are fattening and you shouldn't eat them if you want to lose weight.                       | <b>Fact:</b> Nuts are high in calories and fat, but they are also low in saturated fat (the fat that can lead to high cholesterol and increased risk of heart disease).<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Nuts are a good source of protein and fiber, and don't have any cholesterol. In small amounts, nuts can be a part of a healthy weight-loss program.  |
| 7. Eating red meat is bad for your health and will make it harder to lose weight.                  | <b>Fact:</b> Red meat contains some saturated fat and cholesterol but also has nutrients like protein, iron, and zinc.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Eat lean meat (meat without visible fat on it) in small amounts.  |
| 8. Fresh fruits and vegetables are more nutritious than frozen or canned.                          | <b>Fact:</b> Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Eat lots of fruit and veggies but avoid cream sauces or sugary syrups.  |
| 9. Fast foods are always unhealthy and shouldn't be eaten when dieting.                            | <b>Fact:</b> It is possible to make healthy choices at fast food restaurants.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Choose salads and grilled and baked foods. Use small amount of dressings and condiments.   |
| 10. High protein, low carbohydrate diets are a healthy way to lose weight.                         | <b>Fact:</b> In such a diet, most calories come from protein foods (like meats, eggs, cheese) and few from carbohydrates (pasta, bread, fruits, vegetables, rice). These diets can lack important nutrients and the fatty foods in this diet, like bacon and cheese, can cause increased blood cholesterol levels.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Exercise and eat well-balanced and nutritious meals and snacks. |
| 11. Becoming a vegetarian means you are sure to lose weight and be healthier.                      | <b>Fact:</b> Vegetarian diets can be healthy because they are often lower in saturated fat and cholesterol and higher in fiber. Yet, some vegetarians can eat large amounts of bread and pasta, junk food and snacks.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Work with your healthcare provider to be sure you are getting all of the necessary nutrients throughout the day and don't forget to exercise.                |
| 12. Low fat, reduced fat, and lite all mean the same thing.  | <b>Low Fat:</b> Three grams of fat or less per serving.<br><b>Reduced Fat:</b> At least 25% less fat per serving than the original food.<br><b>Lite:</b> At least 50% less fat per serving than the original food.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Check out food labels!  |
| 13. Dairy products are high in fat and should be avoided.  | <b>Fact:</b> Dairy products are your main source of calcium, which is needed to help your bones grow.<br><b>Better Idea:</b> Have 2-3 dairy servings a day. Low or nonfat milk, soy milk, cottage cheese, and yogurt are great dairy options which are low in fat and high in calcium.  |