NUTRITION MYTHS UNCOVERED

Cut through the BS to lose fat, feel better and take control of your health.

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We have all been there ´l .jumping from diet to diet, hoping to find one that finally helps us shed those 20 pounds. We read some information in a magazine, see an article online, check out a couple of Instagram posts, and hear something else from a co-worker whose cousin's ex-boyfriend is a trainer. Unfortunately, with so much (mis)information in the world today, it's almost impossible to filter through the garbage and find truly meaningful advice. Everyone seems to be a health expert and every media source wants to demonize or glorify the next superfood.

Sadly, a lot of these "healthy" diets do more harm than good when it comes to fat loss. You may lose weight initially, but it comes back, and often exceeds our starting weight when we return to our normal habits. Many of these diets also negatively alter our hormones and actually make us store (rather than burn) fat. If something sounds too good to be true, it most likely is. So we are here to help you with all that frustration! Explaining these nutrition myths will help you cut through the BS and clarify some of the common misconceptions about nutrition.

Nutrition Myths

1) Fat makes you fat
2) Eating lots of protein is bad for your health
3) Low-fat/high-carb diets are best for fat loss
4) A calorie is a calorie
5) Fat loss = *Yvz¥nf¦ nx minus *Yvz¥nf¦ z©¨
6) Eating every few hours speeds up our metabolism
7) Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
8) Eat your carbs in the morning
9) There is a perfect diet

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This myth has probably caused more damage to the American healthcare system than any other. 3Y¨n¦ f®nvÎ 3Y¨ wYuf¦ ±z© kY¨Î 3Y¨ bvz l¦ ±z©¥ Y¥¨f¥nf¦Î 3Y¨ unw¦ç The idea that saturated fat

causes heart disease has been the cornerstone of most nutritional recommendations for the past 60 years. Go to the grocery store and count how many products claim to be “low-fat” or “fat-free.”

What is often forgotten is that fat is essential to the human diet. That’s right - we cannot live without fat. It is a great energy source, helps in the formation of hormones, cell membranes (the protective layer around the cell), and brain and nervous tissues. Fat also transports vitamins A, D, E, and K, and provides two essential fatty acids that the body cannot make on its own (omega-3 and omega-6).

Healthy fats found in foods like olive oil, avocados, and nuts can even have beneficial effects on blood pressure, blood vessels, inflammation, cholesterol, and metabolism. So don’t let anyone tell you to avoid fat. It’s crucial to our health.

You may wonder ¯zxÐ¨ Y mn lmÝkY¨ dnf¨ wYuf wf kY¨É Not necessarily. People can stay (or become) very lean and healthy on high-fat diets. The problem comes when you combine a high-fat intake with a high-carbohydrate intake - especially a high intake of refined carbs like bread, pasta, cereals, sweetened beverages, crackers, and sugar.

This doesn’t mean that all fat is good or that we need to eat as much as we can. It means we need to know which types of fat are most beneficial and how to balance the different types we consume. As always, quality is most important. So make sure you’re getting fat from ¤©Ym¨± sources like eggs, coconut oil, olive oil, grass-fed butter, grass-fed meats, avocados, nuts, and seeds. But, like most things, don’t go overboard. Fat contains more calories per gram than carbs and protein, so it’s easy to rack up a lot of calories if you’re not careful.

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There has been some fuss about eating high amounts of protein. Most of this revolves around kidney health. But research has shown that, in those with healthy kidneys, higher protein intake is well tolerated and presents no stress to your kidneys. Higher protein intake can actually be vital for immune function, metabolism, weight management, and performance.

There are also some concerns about bone health and calcium loss. Some research has shown a short-term increase in calcium loss with higher protein intake, but studies done over long periods have shown the exact opposite. In fact, eating more protein is regularly associated with improved bone density and lower risk of fracture in old age. Additionally, higher protein diets have shown other benefits, such as increased muscle mass, reduced body fat, and a lower risk of heart disease.

So don't be afraid of extra protein. If your goal is fat loss and/or muscle gain, protein should be a big focus of your meals.

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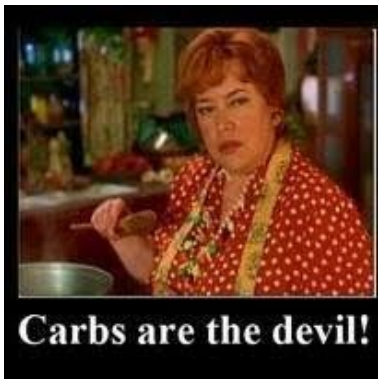
This runs parallel to the "fat makes you fat" myth. When research emerged in the 1950s showing a correlation between saturated fat and heart disease, the Western world began its war on fat.

Since there are only three macronutrients to choose from (fat, carbohydrates, and protein), a reduction - or elimination - of fat meant we had to make up for those calories another way.



And, so became the infatuation with carbohydrates. As recently as 1995, the American Heart Association made nutrition recommendations that included low-fat cookies and crackers, hard candy, sugar, syrup, and gumdrops. Seriously. They basically said, "eat ANYTHING as long as it doesn't contain fat." This has proven to be poor advice and has caused a lot of damage to people's health.

Most problems with a high-carbohydrate intake come from refined carbs (bread, pasta, cereals, sweetened beverages, crackers, etc.) and added sugars. These enter the bloodstream at a rapid rate, causing dramatic increases in blood sugar and insulin, which ultimately lead to high blood pressure, high cholesterol, insulin

resistance, and eventually diabetes. In other words, BAD NEWS FOR YOUR HEALTH. So perhaps we need to look beyond fat as the enemy of heart health.

You may find it hard to believe, but the human body can survive on virtually no carbohydrate intake. Some would even argue this is optimal because when carb intake is low, our body uses fat and protein (to create ketones) to fuel our brain and muscles versus using carbs. It's not generally recommended to go to this extreme, but it shows that different types of diets can work for different people. While fat and protein are necessary for normal function, carbohydrates are not. It certainly doesn't make much sense to follow conventional advice and eat 60% of your calories from carbohydrates.

That said, there's no reason to *fwwxY¨f* carbohydrates from our diet. But we should replace a lot of the empty calories we typically get from eating them with nutrient-dense foods like quality protein, fat, and fresh vegetables, which can go a long way in improving our health and performance.

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*þāý bYvz¥nf¦ k¥zw Y bYx zk *zuf n¦ ¨mf ¦Ywf Y¦ þāý bYvz¥nf¦ k¥zw Yx Y®zbYdz*. Looking strictly at energy content, yes, these two are the same. But do you really think your body will respond the same way to Coke as an avocado? With that logic, we could get all of our calories from doughnuts OR fresh vegetables and the outcome would be the same.

While ¤©Yx¨n¨± of food and calories is important, food ¤©Yw¨± is often overlooked. Imagine eating 2,000 calories a day of cinnamon rolls, brownies, cookies, and pop tarts. Then imagine eating 2,000 calories of fresh greens, grass-fed beef, wild-caught salmon, and organic vegetables. Would you feel the same after each one? No way! Your body craves quality food.

J©Yw¨± means good macronutrients (fat, protein, and carbohydrates) as well as good micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients). Eating sugar and refined

carbohydrates will give you plenty of carbs, but almost no fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, or phytonutrients, which means your body will still be hungry because it's looking for those essential nutrients.

The food we eat also has a big impact on our hormones. Hormones affect nearly every aspect of our health, including appetite and the way we process food. By eating the wrong types of food, we can program our body to store extra fat, turning ourselves into fat-storing machines. Think about that. We could eat the same meal as our "thin" friend, and our body may store more fat than theirs. It seems unfair, but we need to use this knowledge to improve our diets to get our hormones working for us rather than against us.

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Many trainers and dietitians like to view the weight loss battle as a simple equation of calories in versus calories out. So let's do a little hypothetical math. Say we estimate our resting metabolic rate to be 2,500 calories, which is the number of calories we burn in a given day without any exercise. Then we burn an additional 1,500 calories during our workout according to our fitness watch - a lot of calories, but not beyond reach for a long, hard training session. So we're 4,000 calories in the hole at this point.

If our only food for the day is 500 calories of cheese and crackers for dinner, we are at a 3,500 calorie deficit for the day. According to research estimates, those 3,500 calories should equal one pound on the scale. Unfortunately, while all this math sounds great, there is very little likelihood that you will weigh exactly one pound less at the end of the day.

The problem is that all of these calculations are merely estimates. Without having a thorough metabolic evaluation, you're only ESTIMATING your metabolic rate. When it comes to your workout and your fitness watch, you are not getting precise numbers - only estimates. While

technology is making incredible progress and the numbers can give you a *lfxf¥Yv* idea of your work output, you can't count on them to be perfect.

In addition, you can't count on those 500 calories in your cheese and crackers to be exactly 500 calories. Food labels can have an error margin of up to 25% and the energy we spend digesting and absorbing food can vary from 2-5%. Add up all of these ESTIMATES and there's no way you can reliably gauge the exact amount of weight you will lose.

Not only are calorie estimates imprecise, but the way our bodies use those calories is an entirely different factor. The hormonal environment of your body plays a key role in how nutrients are used. Will a bag of chips be used as fuel or go straight to your spare tire? That depends on the balance of hormones in your body. If we can better balance our hormones through habits like good sleep, stress reduction, regular exercise, and healthy eating, our bodies will handle those calories better than someone who is a hormonal wreck.

This doesn't mean calories don't matter. They certainly play a role in our fat loss and fat gain. And people can gain a lot of knowledge about their nutrition by tracking food intake for a period of time. But obsessing over exact calorie calculations while ignoring bigger factors like sleep, stress, and regular exercise can lead to a frustrating outcome.

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.Y¨ f®f¥± ¨m¥ff mz©¥¦ ¨z ¦¨zuf ±z©¥ wf¨Yazv¦w Yxd afbzwf YkY¨Ýa©¥xnxl wYbmxfÇ We have probably all heard this or read it in a fitness magazine, thinking that if we don't get our Snickers bar in by 3:01 pm, our metabolism will implode and add three pounds to our hips by the next morning. It's commonly believed that "your metabolism is like a furnace that must be constantly fed." Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Now, that doesn't mean we ¦*mz©vdx*¤¨ eat every few hours, it only means we shouldn't expect to achieve some type of added benefit by doing so. Regardless of what you've heard, it's okay to listen to your body and eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full.

In terms of metabolism, no significant differences have been seen between people eating 5-6 small meals during the day and people eating 2-3

larger meals. So, listen to your body. If you're not hungry at lunchtime, don't think you have to force something down just for the sake of eating lunch at noon. Maybe you're not hungry until 3pm. Eat your "lunch" then. Find what works best for you.

One caveat to "listening to your body"...if waiting until you're hungry means waiting until you're ravenous and need to eat every piece of food in the pantry, this can backfire. It's important to experiment with what level of hunger is right for you. Mild hunger is not an emergency and can actually help you better understand your cravings.

For those of you who eat every 2-3 hours, what happens when you miss a meal? A little fatigue, irritability, maybe light-headedness? Are you feeling "hangry?" Your body can become dependent on having a constant stream of calories to function properly. So it's important to go a little longer between meals from time to time to teach yourself how to recognize real hunger cues and differentiate them from clock cues (8am breakfast, 12pm lunch, 6pm dinner). Why? Because it's nice to be able to skip a meal (intentionally or not) and not feel like you're going to kick in a door to get your next snack.

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This has been one of the most popular concepts in the world of health and nutrition. While we are not claiming it is necessary to skip breakfast, we're simply stating that the idea that breakfast is the key to health is a big stretch. People who eat breakfast can be very healthy. People who don't eat breakfast can also be very healthy.

There can be advantages to skipping (or at least delaying) breakfast. When we wake up, our body is in fat-burning mode. Our cortisol is high and our insulin is low. Since we aren't able to eat every three hours during sleep, our body relies on fat stores to keep our brain and other organs functioning properly.

When we wake up to enjoy some waffles (sugar), syrup (sugar), and orange juice (more sugar), we immediately flip that switch from fat-burning mode to sugar burning mode. Our blood

sugar and insulin go up and we stop reaching into those fat stores for energy. In fact, we may just re-fill those fat stores that got us through the night. And we're setting ourselves up for energy swings and cravings throughout the rest of the day.

Think about the most common breakfast foods: toast, cereal, pancakes, waffles, bagels, and juice. What are those foods almost exclusively composed of? Carbohydrates. And not the healthy kind of carbs, but refined carbs, which are treated like sugar in the body. What happens when we eat sugar for breakfast? Our blood sugar spikes and then comes crashing down within 2-3 hours. Why do you think we need a mid-morning snack by 9 or 10am?

As mentioned, breakfast isn't necessarily a bad thing. But we make it a bad thing by prioritizing loads of carbohydrates. The way we can keep our body using fat as fuel is to focus on higher protein, higher fat options. For example, eggs, Greek yogurt (not loaded with sugar), nut butter (peanut, almond, cashew, etc), sausage, ham, and protein smoothies are great options. Make an omelet with some peppers, mushrooms, and onions, and you're good to go! And, you shouldn't need to reach for the granola bar at 9:30.

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Many of us have read or heard "don't eat carbs later in the day or you will store them as fat," or "you have to eat all your carbs in the morning so you have the rest of the day to burn them." This is not true.

To add to what we've already covered about nutrient timing (e.g. eat protein for breakfast to keep you full) there are two prime times to eat carbs if you're going to eat a larger quantity:

- Post-workout: Focus the majority of your carbs in the post-workout window (0-3 hours after your workout), because that is when your hormones are primed to use them as fuel/recovery rather than store them as fat

- The evening: Eating some carbs in the evening can help promote healthy growth hormone levels (essential for proper brain function, energy levels, bone tissues, muscle mass, and much more), which is released while you sleep. Additionally, evening carbs can help improve sleep quality and restore glycogen, which allows you to train harder during your next workout.