

NUTRITION FACT OR FICTION

TRUE OR FALSE?



Chewing gum burns calories.



Chocolate is good for you.



Carbohydrates are healthy choices.

Before we reveal which of the above statements are fact or fiction, we will discuss how myths begin in the first place and are perpetuated. There is a wealth of nutrition information available to today's consumers. However, not all of it is based on science. Many products make nutrition claims that just cannot be supported by evidence. With all of the information out there, how does a person decide what's best for them? People, in general, want a quick fix. They're often influenced by the short-term goal of wanting to fit into their new jeans or look good in their swimsuit for an upcoming beach trip. Desperation makes them vulnerable to trying weight loss methods that offer quick results. Most of them don't work and some of them may even be harmful.



Many diet claims are based on fact initially but then are manipulated to appeal to consumers. For example, diets that claim, "eat all you want and still lose weight" makes one think he or she doesn't have to change eating habits at all to lose weight. In actuality, the diet may allow one to, "eat all the fruits and vegetables" one wants and still lose weight. People need to look at the big picture when it comes to their eating habits. One's total diet, seven-day -a-week, 365-days-a-year, should be the focus. It's what one does *most* of the time, not *some* of the time that matters.



Many myths have some connection to fad diets, such as the Atkins diet, which is a high protein low carbohydrate diet. Fad diets offer "quick fixes," not lifestyle change. "Certain nutritional changes can be helpful for some people, and the same change can be harmful for others depending upon their overall health needs," Kerry Neville a registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson cautions. If a new "healthy" weight loss idea appeals to you that claims to be safe and effective, consult a dietitian or research the studies that have been done which prove this method works.



There are myths that we've all heard:

- For example, chocolate milk isn't good for children due to sugar content; eating carbohydrates causes weight gain; eating just before bedtime is fattening; and organic milk is healthier than regular milk.

The American Dietetic Association has been able to put some of these myths to rest:



Myth: Eating carbohydrates causes weight gain.

Fact: Calories cause weight gain. Excess carbohydrates are no more fattening than calories from any source. Despite the claims of low-carb diet books, a high-carbohydrate diet does not promote fat storage by enhancing insulin resistance.



Myth: Eating just before bedtime is fattening

Fact: What you eat, not when, makes the difference; calories have the same effect on the body no matter when they are consumed. Evidence does suggest that eating regular meals, especially breakfast, helps promote weight loss by reducing fat intake and minimizing impulsive snacking.



Myth: Flavored milk isn't good for children due to sugar content.

Fact: Flavored milk delivers the same nutrients as regular milk. Unflavored milk is lower in sugar but it is better to drink flavored milk to ensure intake of protein, calcium and vitamin D.



Myth: Organic milk is healthier than regular milk.

Fact: There is no conclusive scientific evidence that organic food including milk is superior with regard to food safety and nutrition. Organic and regular milk contain the same nine essential nutrients that make dairy products an important part of a healthy diet.

One of the rewards of small changes is a feeling of accomplishment over the course of time. Setting weekly or monthly goals and attaining them helps keep motivation for lifestyle changes high. Making changes takes time, dedication, self-control, and knowledge. It is very simple to accomplish some of these components such as; taking the time to read food labels to get nutrition facts to help you make healthier food choices, get food facts from an expert such as a registered dietitian, also you can use Mypyramid.gov to personalize your diet to meet your needs.

Finally, we'll reveal the answers to the myths from the beginning. **All three statements are actually true!**

- Studies show that chewing gum can burn about 11 calories per hour which adds up to 96,000 calories in a year or the equivalent of 27 pounds!
- Dark Chocolate helps raise HDL (good) cholesterol and complex carbohydrates provide long lasting energy and fiber. Just remember that when you hear new information on nutrition, find out if it's fact or fiction before adopting it into your lifestyle.