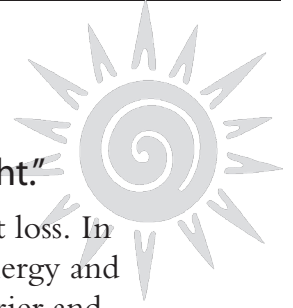


Debunking Diet Myths



MYTH #1: "Skipping meals will effectively help me lose weight."

FACT: There is no evidence that skipping meals will promote weight loss. In fact, when you skip meals, your body reacts by trying to conserve energy and burn fewer calories by decreasing your metabolic rate. You feel hungrier and less energetic, and you will tend to overeat when you do eat. For example, studies show that those who skip breakfast tend to eat more later in the day. The best way to keep your metabolism primed is to eat regular meals and snacks throughout the day starting with breakfast. Having regular meals and snacks will also keep your body satisfied and your brain nourished so that you can focus on achieving your goals!

MYTH #2: "Fasting is a good way to cleanse my body of impurities and toxins."


FACT: Actually, fasting can cause a build-up of toxic substances in the body. Toxins such as ammonia and ketones are released when your body's fat tissue or protein stores are used as an energy source when carbohydrate is not available. Thus, the concentration of toxins in the blood could increase significantly over a short period of time due to fasting. The best way to control the level of toxins in your body is to consume a wide variety of foods and drink plenty of water. Make sure you include fruits and vegetables and high fibre foods.

MYTH #3: "The lower the fat in your diet, the healthier you will be."

FACT: Not true! A moderate amount of fat in your diet is essential for health. Dietary fat provides flavour, texture and palatability to foods. It is also necessary for the absorption and utilization of fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K). These vitamins are important for skin health, vision, immune system function, and function of reproductive organs. Fat has many other important functions: major long term energy source, source of essential fatty acids, constituent of hormones...just to name a few! A healthy body needs fat!

MYTH #4: "All people of my height, gender and age should weigh the same."

FACT: Several factors influence your body weight, many of which you have no control over. Height, gender and age are important, but so are genetics,



bone mass and muscle mass. Because of these variations, there is a wide range of healthy weights for every given height.

MYTH #5: “Eating before going to bed causes weight gain.”

FACT: A common belief is that eating in the evening before going to sleep results in fat storage and weight gain because metabolism is lowered. There is no evidence to support this belief. It is the total energy intake that impacts weight, not the timing. Food consumed in the evening does not have any more influence on weight than food consumed during the day. The energy from food consumed in the evening will be used for energy needs during the day and overnight. Your body does not stop digesting food according to the time. While we sleep, our bodies require energy for repair, maintenance of tissues and removal of wastes. Enjoy a snack before bedtime, it may even help you sleep better!

MYTH #6: “Feeling full is an indication that I have overeaten and will therefore gain weight.”

FACT: Feeling full is a natural physiological sensation that tells you that you have eaten enough food to satisfy your energy requirements and prompts you to stop eating. Similarly, the sensation of hunger is a cue that you require food for energy. People tend to feel heavier when they are full and satisfied after a meal, but this does not translate into weight gain. Eating past the feeling of fullness once in a while will not cause weight gain, either; our bodies are good at adapting. However, weight gain could occur if you consistently ignore your fullness cues and overeat. So listen to your body’s cues – it knows what it needs.

MYTH #7: “Certain foods increase metabolic rate and promote weight loss (e.g. grapefruit, caffeine, celery, hot pepper).”

FACT: A popular diet theory is that certain foods have the ability to burn fat. At present, there is no evidence that any magic food will do this. Many diets that promote this idea, e.g. “The Grapefruit Diet”, result in weight loss simply because people following the diet are eating little else, putting themselves at risk of nutrient deficiencies. However, while no food has the power to burn fat and promote weight loss, intake of food generally temporarily increases metabolic rate slightly due to the digestive process, also known as the thermic effect of food.

Source: EDAW Nutrition Committee