Nutrition Myths, Facts, and Tips

With so many products and weight-loss theories out there, it’s very easy to get confused. The following information should help clear up confusion about weight loss and nutritional strategies. It may also help you make healthy changes in your eating and physical activity habits. If you have nutritional questions not answered here, talk to a registered dietitian, or other qualified health professional. He/she can give you advice on how to follow a healthy eating plan, lose weight safely, and keep it off.

Myth: Fad diets work for permanent weight loss.

Fact: Fad diets are not the best ways to lose weight and keep it off. These eating plans often promise to help you lose a lot of weight quickly, or tell you to cut certain foods out of your diet to lose weight. Although you may lose weight at first while on these kinds of diets, they can be unhealthy because they often keep you from getting all the nutrients that your body needs. Fad diets may seriously limit or forbid certain types of food, so most people quickly get tired of following such a regimen and regain the lost weight. Fad diets are also unhealthy because they may not provide all of the nutrients your body needs. In addition, losing weight at a very rapid rate (more than 3 pounds a week after the first couple of weeks) may increase your risk for developing gallstones. Diets that provide less than 800 calories per day could also result in heart rhythm abnormalities, which can be fatal.

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Tip: Research suggests that losing ½ to 2 pounds a week by making healthy food choices, eating moderate portions, and building physical activity into your daily life is the best way to lose weight and keep it off. By adopting healthy eating and physical activity habits, you may also lower your risk for developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

Myth: High-protein/low-carbohydrate diets are a healthy way to lose weight.

Fact: The long-term health effects of a high-protein/low-carbohydrate diet are unknown. Consuming most of your daily calories from high-protein foods like meat, eggs, and cheese is not a balanced eating plan. You may be eating too much fat and cholesterol, which may raise heart disease risk. In addition, you may be eating too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which may lead to constipation due to lack of dietary fiber. Following a high-protein/low-carbohydrate diet may also make you feel nauseous, tired, and weak. In addition, eating fewer than 130 grams of carbohydrate a day can lead to the buildup of ketones (partially broken-down fats) in your blood. A buildup of ketones in your blood (called ketosis) can cause your body to produce high levels of uric acid, which is a risk factor for gout (a painful swelling of the joints) and kidney stones. Ketosis may be especially risky for pregnant women and people with diabetes or kidney disease.

Tip: High-protein/low-carbohydrate diets are often low in calories because food choices are strictly limited. Ultimately, they may cause short-term weight loss. However, a reduced-calorie eating plan that includes recommended amounts of carbohydrate, protein, and fat will also allow you to lose weight. By following a balanced eating plan, you will not have to stop eating whole classes of foods, such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables - and miss the key nutrients they contain. You may also find it easier to stick with a diet or eating plan that includes a greater variety of foods.

Myth: Starches are fattening and should be limited when trying to lose weight.

Fact: Many foods high in starch, like bread, rice, pasta, cereals, beans, fruits, and some vegetables (like potatoes and yams) are low in fat and calories. They become high in fat and calories when eaten in large portion sizes or when covered with high-fat toppings like butter, sour cream, or mayonnaise. Foods high in starch (also called complex carbohydrates) are an important source of energy for your body.

Tip: A healthy eating plan is one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products. It's also recommended to include lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts. A healthy diet is also low in saturated fats, trans fat, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Myth: Certain foods, like grapefruit, celery, or cabbage soup, can burn fat and make you lose weight.

Fact: No foods can burn fat. Some foods with caffeine may speed up your metabolism (the way your body uses energy, or calories) for a short time, but they do not cause weight loss.

Tip: The best way to lose weight is to cut back on the number of calories you eat and be more physically active.

Myth: Natural or herbal weight-loss products are safe and effective.

Fact: A weight-loss product that claims to be "natural" or "herbal" is not necessarily safe. These products are not usually scientifically tested to prove that they are safe or that they work. For example, herbal products containing ephedra (now banned by the U.S. Government) have caused serious health problems and even death. Newer products that claim to be ephedra-free are not necessarily danger-free, because they may contain ingredients similar to ephedra.

Tip: Talk with your health care provider before using any weight-loss product. Some natural or herbal weight-loss products can be harmful.

Source: Web MD
Exercise Can Overcome Obesity Gene
Study Shows Physical Activity Can Offset Genetic Predisposition for Obesity

Though genetics do play a role in obesity, a new study shows regular physical activity can blunt the impact of a genetic predisposition to being overweight. Variations of a particular gene, known as the fat mass and obesity associated (FTO) gene, are widely acknowledged to be linked with a high body mass index; according to the study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

Researchers from the University of Maryland School of Medicine examined how lifestyle affected the weight of people with a genetic predisposition to being overweight. Researchers studied DNA samples of 704 healthy Amish adults, collected between 2003 and 2007. Participants also underwent physiological tests, including a seven-day measurement of physical activity using an accelerometer, which participants wore on their body. The instrument measured activity level at 15-second intervals.

The participants had an average age of 44 years; 53% were men. 54% percent of the men were overweight and 10% were obese. About 64% of the women were overweight and 31% were obese.

The group was divided into people with high activity levels and low activity levels. The highly active group burned about 900 more calories per day than the lower activity group. That equals about three to four hours of moderately intensive physical activity, such as brisk walking, house cleaning, or gardening.

The study showed, as past research has, that people with certain variations of the FTO gene were more likely to be overweight. However, the researchers found that being genetically predisposed to obesity had “no effect” on those with above average physical activity scores.

As obesity increasingly becomes a global health concern, understanding all aspects of the FTO gene is important, the researchers say. Variants of the FTO gene are prevalent — about 30% of European populations have such variants, according to the study. The gene variants are associated with a greater than 20% risk for obesity, write the researchers.

Study authors conclude, “These findings emphasize the important role of physical activity in public health efforts to combat obesity, particularly in genetically susceptible individuals.”

Source: Harvard Health

Portion control is a critical part of successful weight loss and weight management. The WebMD Portion Size Plate gives you easy-to-understand guidelines to help you avoid some common portion-size pitfalls.

CLICK HERE

or type:
www.webmd.com/diet/healthtool-portion-size-plate
Are You Anxious...or Just Plain Worried?

Everyone worries or gets frightened from time to time. These are normal, even healthy, responses to threatening situations. But if you feel extremely worried or afraid much of the time, or often feel panicky, consider talking with your doctor.

Anxiety can make you so uneasy around people that you isolate yourself, missing out on social events and potential friendships. It can fill you with such obsessive thoughts or inexplicable dread of ordinary activities that you cannot work. Anxiety disorders can be mild, moderate, or severe, but overcoming them generally takes more than just "facing your fears." Many people need help in dealing with these problems.

There has long been a stigma surrounding getting help for anxiety. People are ashamed to admit to phobias and persistent worries, which seem like signs of weakness. Add to that the tendency of people with anxiety to avoid others, and you have perhaps the biggest obstacle to relief and recovery. Without treatment, many individuals become more fearful and isolated. In extreme cases, they are so imprisoned by their anxiety that they are unable to leave home.

Sigmund Freud regarded anxiety as the result of inner emotional conflict or external danger. While these factors often contribute to anxiety, scientists now know that anxiety disorders are biologically based illnesses. Sophisticated brain imaging enables scientists to trace the neural pathways of fear and anxiety. In the process, they’ve discovered certain brain abnormalities in anxiety sufferers. Research also suggests that genes may contribute to these abnormalities. This growing knowledge about anxiety has already led to safer, more effective treatments.

Anxiety disorders, which include panic attacks and phobias, affect about 19 million American adults and millions of children. For every individual with an anxiety disorder, many more are affected by it, including spouses, children, other relatives, friends, and employers.

The good news is that there are many therapies to help control anxiety and improve quality of life for sufferers. Medications can, in many cases, reduce or eliminate symptoms. Several types of psychosocial therapy, especially cognitive-behavioral therapy, also help by teaching people to adopt more positive thought and behavior patterns. Some medications under development may even help prevent anxiety disorders in people genetically predisposed to them.

Anxiety affects the way a person thinks, but anxiety can lead to physical symptoms, as well. Symptoms of anxiety include:

- Excessive, ongoing worry and tension
- An unrealistic view of problems
- Restlessness or a feeling of being "edgy"
- Irritability
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Sweating
- Difficulty concentrating
- Nausea
- The need to go to the bathroom frequently
- Tiredness
- Trouble falling or staying asleep
- Trembling
- Being easily startled

What if you are just plain worried?

Not everyone who suffers from frequent worry has an anxiety disorder. If you don’t have an anxiety disorder, but think you worry too much, the following advice may help.

- Practice relaxation techniques. Listen to music or to relaxation recordings to take your mind off whatever is worrying you...maybe try progressive muscle relaxation.
- Exercise regularly. Studies have found that exercise improves mood and modestly decreases anxiety symptoms. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on all or most days.
- Consider biofeedback. Biofeedback helps you become aware of your body’s responses to stress and teaches you how to control them using relaxation and cognitive techniques.

Source: Harvard Health
Recipe of the Month

Risotto with Fresh Peas, Shrimp and Prosciutto

Ingredients
1 pound (unshelled weight) fresh peas, shelled
3 to 3 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth.
salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper
2 teaspoons olive oil
1/2 cup diced onions
1 1/2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 clove minced garlic
1 cup Arborio rice
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 pound thinly sliced prosciutto, cut into thin strips about 2 inches long
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size: 1 bowl of risotto with shrimp</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories: 384</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protein: 33 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate: 44 g</td>
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Dietary Fiber: 3 g
Soluble Fiber: 0 g
Insoluble Fiber: 0 g
Sugar: 2 g
Total Fat: 7 g
Saturated Fat: 3 g
Monounsaturated Fat: 3 g

Cooking Instructions
1. Cook the peas in a pot of well salted water until they are tender, about 5 minutes (longer if the peas are large). Drain and plunge the peas into a bowl of ice water. When the peas are cool, drain and set aside.
2. Heat the chicken broth in a small saucepan, season it well with salt and pepper and keep warm over low heat.
3. In another large saucepan, heat the olive oil. Add the onion, season lightly with salt and pepper and cook until it is translucent, about 5 minutes.
4. Turn the heat up to high and add the shrimp and garlic. Cook until the shrimp are just opaque, about 2 minutes. Transfer the shrimp to a plate and set aside.
5. Turn the heat down to low, add the rice to the onions and garlic in the pan and stir to combine. Add about 1 cup of the hot broth and stir slowly until the broth is absorbed. Continue to add the broth 1 cup at a time, occasionally stirring slowly, letting the rice absorb the broth before adding more.
6. The rice is cooked when it is creamy on the outside and just al dente in the center, about 20 to 25 minutes total. Stir in the shrimp, half of the peas and half of the Parmesan cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. If the risotto is too thick, add a little more broth until it becomes creamy.
7. Divide the risotto among warmed serving dishes and top each serving with strips of prosciutto, the remaining peas and Parmesan cheese and garnish with the chopped parsley.

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Cooking time: 30 minutes
Serves: 6

Source: ACE Fitness

Our lives are not determined by what happens to us, but how we react to what happens to us, not by what life brings to us, but by the attitude we bring to life. A positive attitude causes a chain reaction of positive thoughts, events and outcomes. It is a Catalyst... a spark that creates extraordinary results.

~ Anonymous

Please Contact Michael Severson at seversmd@tvfr.com if you have any questions.