inspiyr
IVE BETTER

" Life has no limitations, except the ones you make. "

~Les Brown

GET STARTED   **GET HEALTHY**   **GET HAPPY**   **GET MOTIVATED**   **GET SUCCESS**   E

30 Things Nutrition Experts Wish You Would Stop Saying About Food

inspiyr.com

Food. It's a huge part of the American culture, and it's something we just can't stop talking about. There are a lot of myths floating around out there, and with the innovation of the internet, there are quite a few opinions.

There are some obviously untrue myths, but there are also quite a few that you probably believe! We interviewed over a dozen health and nutrition experts and asked them a simple question: "What do you wish people would stop saying about food?"

The answers were pretty surprising. Here are the top food myths...that you probably don't even realize aren't true.

Things Nutritionists Wish You Wouldn't Say About Food

1. The word "fresh" always means healthy.

Ever hear brands use the word "fresh"—especially fast food brands?

Don't trust it, says Erik Frank, CEO of Your Nutrition Delivery. "I hate the overuse of the word 'fresh,'" Frank says. "For example, is Subway really fresh? Their meat is processed and up in till 6 months ago their bread contained azodicarbonamide, also known as the 'yoga mat compound.' However, they offer the 'Subway Fresh Fit choices' that contains meat with more nitrates then Justin Bieber has twitter followers."

Related: 8 Things I Learned That Totally Changed The Way I Eat Food

Frank urges people to stop associating the word "fresh" with "healthy," as this is merely another marketing gimmick. "Do your homework and make sure that you truly understand what you are putting in your body," he says.

2. Frozen food isn't as good as "fresh."

Personal trainer, fitness model, and founder of Fit And Ageless Over 50, Barbara Wade agrees with the fallacy of the word "fresh," adding that many seem to equate frozen with being lesser. "Frozen

produce can be as nutritious as fresh, since it's flash-frozen shortly after picking, which means that it retains more nutrients than if it has to travel unfrozen for days," she says.

3. "Dr. Oz said…"

Everyone has heard of Dr. Oz and his incredibly popular health show. However, too many people have come to take every word out of his mouth as absolute fact.

"Let's get this straight: Dr. Oz gave some pretty sound health advice in his early years, but that has since changed as his show gained popularity and he became more of an entertainer than a doctor," says Rene Ficek, registered dietician and lead nutrition expert at Seattle Sutton's Healthy Eating. "He should have stuck to giving advice in regards to cardiology, and not encouraging supplements that do not work…Nutrition experts everywhere find his advice infuriating, as so many consumers respect him and follow his advice."

Related: 5 Secrets Nutritionists And Fitness Experts Haven't Told You

It's essential to keep your guard up when it comes to the media, and remind yourself that they are trying to sell you something, even if it's not directly. "Always keep in mind that when something sounds too good to be true, it usually is," says Ficek.

4. There is an absolute "right" way to eat.

Sure, it's important to "eat right"—but this doesn't mean there is one absolute way you should be eating. This is another way the media tries to control us into giving them our hard-earned money. "We give our own power away and succumb to mass marketers' 'right way' to eat," says fitness expert Jennifer Galardi. "Experiment. Learn. Grow. Understand the daily habits that support you and food you need to eat so that you can thrive and be radiant and have energy. Then do it."

5. Diets are always the way to go.

There are a thousand and one diets out there, but healthy eating shouldn't just be a temporary diet, but a permanent lifestyle change. "One should always eat healthy and not have extremes of very low caloric intakes or food group elimination," says nutritionist and certified dietician Sharon Richter.

Related: 5 Reasons Why Diets Fail

Steer clear of fads like "the three-day military diet" and remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

6. You can fix a crappy diet with supplements.

Put down the supplements and vitamins, and listen up. You can't get everything you need from a pill, according to registered dietician and author Liz Pearson. "Whole foods provide a complex mix of nutrients and plant compounds that can't be replicated in a pill," says Pearson.

7. Fat is bad for you.

Fat has often been demonized, but the reality is that fat is necessary for a healthy lifestyle and body.

"One of the biggest myths that I still hear has to do with fats being unhealthy," says naturopathic doctor Dr. Donielle (Doni) Wilson. "It comes in many forms…anything from 'all fat is bad fat' to 'fat-free is a better choice' and 'nuts will make you gain weight.'"

It's actually impossible to be healthy without fat. "We need healthy dietary fat to burn fat, fuel our brains, regulate body temperature and blood sugar levels, ensure healthy hormone regulation, and protect our organs," says health coach and nutritional consultant Mindy Gorman. "Fat is an essential macronutrient and facilitates the absorption of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K."

Related: 6 Foods High In Healthy Fats

There is, indeed, such a good thing as "good fat." "Omega-3 fatty acids, which can be found in tuna and walnuts, help lower and control blood pressure," says fitness icon Denise Austin. "Avocados are

high in monounsaturated fat, which reduces levels of bad cholesterol in your blood and lowers your risk of stroke and heart disease."

8. Fat is worse than sugar.

Most people check the label for fat content instead of the real villain: sugar.

"The biggest misconception is that fat makes you fat," says wellness expert and health coach Allison Hagendorf. "Fat doesn't make you fat. Sugar makes you fat."

9. Low-fat is better.

Even if there is "bad fat" in a product, the low-fat version is often no better.

"For example, reduced fat peanut butter adds tons of chemical to lower the total fat intake—not healthy," says Richter.

Dr. Doni believes that this entire approach is all wrong. "We need to bring the focus away from minimizing fats, and instead focus on choosing a balance of healthy fats, carbs, and proteins. When a food is "fat-free," it means it is going to be higher in carbs, which can lead to weight gain much more so than a few nuts, which contain healthy fats, carbs, and protein all in one bite."

Related: 53 Surprising Ways To Get Rid Of Belly Fat

Hollywood cardiologist Dr. Adam Splaver agrees, adding that fat-free "basically means carbohydrate full."

10. Lower calories always means more healthy.

"I wish people would realize that eating less by cutting calories is not always the answer for sustainable weight management," says Gorman. "This is old science. Calories are substances that provide heat, and heat produces energy that fuels our bodies. This energy allows us to function physically, emotionally and psychologically."

Gorman says that when it comes to calories, it's not about quantity, but rather about quality.

"Rather than simply restricting calories, I recommend we examine the quality of our calories and choose nutrient dense foods which provide optimal energy and promote the most efficient use of our metabolism—the rate at which we burn calories. For example, 100 calories of high quality protein or fat is going to be more valuable to the body than a 100 calorie snack pack, commercially produced and comprised of refined, poor quality carbohydrates."

A huge myth is that "a calorie in equals a calorie out," according to fitness and personal development expert Debi Silber. "Not true at all. It's what those calories do that's key."

Related: A Cool New Way To Burn An Extra 947 Calories A Day

11. Counting calories is necessary to lose weight.

Often, when people are trying to lose weight, they immediately start keeping a catalogue of their calorie intake. Though intentions are good here, the root of this is flawed, according to Splaver.

"A calorie produced from protein is not equal to a calorie that comes from sugar," says Splaver. "There are essential amino acids, which we need, that make up proteins, as well as essential oils, such as omega-3, 6 and 9…My advice? Just drop the box of Twinkies, step away, and no one will get hurt!"

Fitness expert Rob Miller agrees, adding, "Eating foods filled with preservatives, sugar and chemicals can be damaging to your body, regardless of the number of calories you consume."

12. Caffeine is bad for you.

Sure, too much caffeine can give you the jitters, but that morning cup of coffee is actually good for you. "Your liver loves coffee, and your risk of many diseases goes down if you drink coffee in moderation," says Pearson. "Caffeine has been given a bad rap and can enhance mental performance and athletic performance."

Related: Is Coffee Or Tea Better For You? The Answer May Surprise You

Pearson suggests no more than 400 mg of caffeine daily.

13. Skipping meals will help you lose weight.

Often, people will skip breakfast or lunch, thinking that the less calories, the better. However, this is essentially starving yourself.

"Attempting to lose weight by starving yourself is not only ineffective, it's also dangerous," warns Austin. "We know that we need to burn more calories than we eat in order to lose weight, so it might seem logical that starving yourself means fewer calories and quicker weight loss, but that's just not the case."

Intermittent fasting is good for you, but by skipping meals without giving it any real thought, we're actually doing more harm than good.

Related: How To Lose Weight Without Diet Or Exercise

"Your body is very complex, and it requires a certain number of calories every day just to function as well as repair itself," says Austin. "By starving yourself, you actually disrupt your metabolism and negate almost any chances of getting results as your body goes into 'starvation mode,' where it tries to conserve all your fat since your are not giving it any fuel."

Instead, says Austin, we should consume small, nutritious meals every few hours throughout the day.

14. "Diet" products are better.

How many times have you seen someone order a big, unhealthy meal, coupled with a Diet Coke? Unfortunately, those diet products won't just keep you from getting heavy, but can actually damage your efforts more than their regular counterparts.

"One of the biggest food myths, especially in America, is that 'diet' foods and drinks are safe and healthy," says Miller. "Studies actually show the contrary. The beginning of the diet food trend coincidentally also marked the beginning of our obesity epidemic."

It's best to steer away from the bad stuff altogether, but if you absolutely must have a soda, it's best to just go with the real thing instead of the diet version.

Related: 6 Dangers Of Diet Soda That Could Shorten Your Life

15. Juicing, paleo, vegan, gluten-free, etc. is the way to go.

Food and diet trends aren't exactly a new thing, but they've been extra popular as of late. However, sticking a label on it doesn't necessarily make it healthy.

"In general, I'm tired of the micro managing of diet and the labels that support that," says Galardi. That includes juicing, paleo, vegan, and even gluten-free.

Be mindful of what you eat, but don't demonize based on a simple label or diet trend.

16. If you're thin, you're healthy.

Just because you have a little extra weight around the thighs doesn't mean you are unhealthy, just like being super thin doesn't mean you're super fit. Everyone's body is different.

"We are a country obsessed about the outer appearance as opposed to the inner functioning and well being of our bodies," says Galardi. "We ignore knowing what may be best for us and listen to what others tell us we should do in order to have the perfect body."

Listen to your body and stop obsessing over your reflection. When you are healthy, your reflection will follow.

Related: 6 Ways To Have Body Confidence

17. All carbohydrates are bad.

You've probably heard all sorts of things about carbohydrates, but they probably all come down to this: they're bad.

However, many of our nutrition experts claimed the opposite. "There's nothing inherently fattening about carbohydrates," said Ficek. "As Americans, we eat the wrong type of carbohydrates such as such as white bread, pasta and doughnuts, which can all raise your risk of developing health problems like heart disease and diabetes. But if you cut out so-called "good-carb" foods, such as whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables, you're missing out on your body's main source of fuel as well as vital nutrients and fiber."

So if "good carbs" are necessary, how did this huge myth start? David Zulberg, author of The 5 Skinny Habits: How Ancient Wisdom Can Help You Lose Weight And Change Your Life Forever, explains that low-carb diets claim that carbs cause the quickest rise in blood sugar, so preventing this would be preventing less fat and less likelihood of diabetes.

Though this theory may seem sound, Zulberg explains: "There is conclusive evidence that unrefined carbohydrates, like whole-wheat products, fruits, and vegetables, are high in fiber and nutrients. This makes them an important part of a well-rounded nutritional diet."

Related: 17 Fruits And Vegetables That Are Low In Carbohydrates

According to registered dietician and nutritionist Kimberly Tessmer, it's not too many carbs that cause weight gain. "It's too many calories in general, whether carb, protein, or fat, that is the culprit," explains Tessmer.

18. You shouldn't eat after 6 pm…

According to Ficek, this is a total myth. "Calories are calories are calories, and it doesn't matter what time you eat them," says Ficek. "Typically the problem is what and how much people tend to eat in the evening, but if you monitor your calorie intake, it doesn't matter what time they are eaten."

19. …and you should never eat right before bed.

Another myth involving time is that you shouldn't eat before bed. Often, people tend to think that eating before bed will cause weight gain because your body doesn't need to digest food at night. According to trainer and YouTube celebrity Mike Chang, "Think about how many hours you sleep in a night. During this time, we are not ingesting any foods; therefore, we are fasting—this is why the morning meal is called breakfast, because you are breaking your fast. While you are sleeping, your body will be breaking down the food you ate and healing your body for the next day of activities."

Related: 8 Bedtime Hacks: A Cheat Sheet For Getting A Good Night's Sleep

20. There's no difference between organic and regular produce.

You've probably heard a lot about organic produce, but don't let anyone tell you that organic is a myth.

"Organic produce is grown without all the pesticides and hormones that are sprayed and injected into regular produce," says Chang. "These chemicals are very low, but over long periods of time, they build up in the human body and have been linked to ADHD and breast cancer."

21. Organic produce has higher nutritional content.

That being said, it doesn't necessarily mean that an organic banana has more potassium than a non-organic banana. "Organic foods do not have higher nutritional content than their regular counterparts," **says certified nutritionist and fitness trainer Franci Cohen**. "They just contain less or no pesticides to preserve shelf-life."

22. Organic foods aren't worth the price.

Organic foods are certainly more expensive. However, this isn't just a marketing gimmick. "I wish [people] would stop saying that organic food is too expensive," says Medical Advisory Board Member of the Nutritional Magnesium Association Carolyn Dean, MD. "Eating organic food is the only way to avoid GMO's, pesticides, and herbicides."

According to Dean, organic is worth the money. "Junk food may be cheaper," says Dean, "but if you are what you eat, you are turning your body into junk, which is a far more expensive proposition health-wise in the long run."

Related: 5 Reasons To Buy Organic Food

23. There are "good" and "bad" foods.

Sure, some foods are healthier than others, but judging them as "good" and "bad" is too black-and-white.

"My desire is for people to stop judging food to be good or bad," says Gorman. "While there are better choices for health and weight management, we need to let go of the moral dilemma that accompanies us to the table."

Corporations simply want us to believe these things, according to Gorman. "When we continue to stay connected to the beliefs generated by a $60 billion dollar diet industry that has us convinced we can't be trusted to know what is right for our bodies, we lose the connection to the wisdom of our bodies which are designed to signal when, what, and how much we need to eat."

Gorman encourages you to remember that everyone is different. "People need to know there is no one size fits all when it comes to dieting and weight management," she says. "When we slow down, tune into our bodies, tune into our hunger and satiety, we receive the message regarding what is right for us."

Related: Always Hungry: The Top 10 Foods That Fill You Up

24. The way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise more.

How often have you heard this myth? Forget it, says Silber: "We need to eat less of the wrong foods, much more of the right foods, and often, less exercise is better for us depending on the type of exercise we're doing."

Your body needs food as fuel—especially if you exercise. The "eat less, exercise more" myth is one that will starve your body.

25. Food is the center of all social activity.

To hang out with friends and loved ones, food does not need to be involved.

"The greatest issue I have with food today it that food has become the center of social activity with too many events evolving around eating," says Vice President of Health for Hallelujah Diet Olin Idol. "Church functions center around food, business meetings center around foods, etc. Most often, it is poor-quality food choices that stimulate the taste buds but leave the cells screaming for nutrients."

When we choose foods for social activities, we often choose the unhealthy ones because we assume that our friends and loved ones prefer them. This needs to stop, says Idol.

Related: From Cravings To Boredom, Here's How To Find Out Why You Snack

26. Healthy foods don't taste good.

How many people do you know who view health foods as punishment?

News flash: healthy foods can be delicious.

"When we focus on nutrient density and healthy qualities of foods, our taste begin to change and we begin to actually enjoy the taste of wholesome, nutrient rich, health promoting foods," says Idol. "It is then that we support and encourage the innate self-healing that is within each of us."

27. You can eat as much healthy food as you like.

That being said, this doesn't mean you should eat an entire fridge-full of fruits and veggies every single day—they still have calories, and though eating healthy calories is better, it's still important to remember that eating too many calories will lead to weight gain. "If you take in more calories than your body needs, you will store it," says Wade.

Related: 5 Ways To Avoid Overeating

28. ____ is the root of the problem of the obesity epidemic.

How many times have you heard this sentence with some random nutritional jargon thrown in? People are always trying to point fingers at what has caused obesity in America—but that concept itself is a myth, according to Jenny Evans, nutrition and exercise physiology expert and author of The Resiliency rEvolution: Your Stress Solution For Life.

"I wish one single ingredient or macronutrient would stop being vilified as 'the' problem," says Evans. "In the 90's, it was fat, then it was carbs, and now it's gluten. None of these things alone lead to poor health or obesity (unless you have celiac disease in the case of gluten, which only affects about 1% of the population), and when we get laser focused on cutting things completely out of our diets it creates stress."

According to Evans, this stress itself is one of the components that is causing the epidemic. "We have to deny ourselves of things we want and need, and when we cut something out, it has to be replaced with something else," says Evans. In the craze of the low fat trend, carbohydrate consumption went up. This happened because people still needed to eat calories, so they ate less fat but more carbohydrates. In addition, the food industry started engineering foods that had less fat, but put carbohydrates in to replace them. No single food is so terrible and evil you can never, ever eat it."

Related: 15 Unhealthiest Foods On The Planet

29. Red meat is bad.

Good news for meat-lovers: you can have the occasional slab of steak, guilt free!

According to Chang, "Just like anything else, moderation is key. Yes, if all you eat is red meat, then yes it can cause problems. But having a good steak once or twice a week will not kill you and is very normal."

30. Everything in moderation.

You may be thinking, didn't they just say moderation is key? But this is a myth when people use it as an excuse, according to celebrity nutrition and fitness expert JJ Virgin. "You hear it all the time, and more often than not, it sabotages fast, lasting fat loss," says Virgin. "Moderation becomes a slippery slope that creates addiction, food intolerances, and weight loss resistance."

The Takeaway

Food is a tricky part of life, but it doesn't have to be. Don't let yourself fall victim to these nutrition myths. Listen to the advice of these nutrition experts: eat healthy, be kind to your body, and start to notice how amazing you feel!