

Top 6 Food Myths Debunked

This month fitness expert **Bernadette Abraham** debunks some of the food myths that we are often exposed to when it comes to weight loss and healthy living

Do you believe that eating turkey makes you drowsy? Do you believe that swallowing a chewing gum takes seven years to digest? Do you believe that water causes cramps when you exercise? If so, you have bought into a number of very popular health myths that are simply untrue.

Unfortunately, there are still many more misconceptions that need to be exposed. Here are the top six food myths that are still being wrongly accepted as truths by many.

Myth #1: Eating celery helps you lose weight.

The theory is that you burn more calories eating a stick of celery than it actually provides – making it a negative calorie food. Here are some actual facts. One 8-inch stalk of celery contains six calories. To burn one pound



of fat, a person needs to expend 3,500 calories. Whether or not celery burns slightly more than six calories during digestion is irrelevant when it comes to fat loss. The fact remains that the total amount of energy spent digesting a stick of celery is quite insignificant compared to the large number of calories needed to burn off one pound of fat.

While celery alone will not induce fat loss, eating a combination of lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and fibrous vegetables will help. The mere act of eating is in itself a metabolic stimulus. In other words, there are certain foods that require more energy or burn more calories than others during digestion. These are termed "thermic" foods. Lean protein sources such as fish, chicken breast, egg whites, and lean meats provide a 20 to 25 percent metabolic boost. Complex carbohydrates such as oats, whole grains, yams, and brown rice provide a 10 to 15 percent metabolic boost. In addition, fruits and vegetables offer vital nutrients with minimal calories. These types of foods are termed "nutrient dense". As long as you are eating nutrient dense and thermic foods in moderate proportions throughout the day, counting calories becomes meaningless if you listen to your body's hunger signals.

Myth #2: You should drink at least eight glasses of water per day.

Water is an essential part of human existence. In fact, the body is mostly made up of water which is vital for digestion, nutrient absorption and elimination. It also helps circulate the blood, remove toxins from the body, lubricate and cushion joints, regulate body temperature, and keep your skin healthy. While the biological benefits of water are clear, the recommendation of drinking eight glasses per day is questionable because of individual needs.

So how much water should a person drink per day? The best recommendation is to check the color of your urine. As long as you are not taking riboflavin or vitamin B2 supplements, which turn urine bright yellow, it should be a very light-colored yellow. If it is a deep yellow, then you are likely not drinking enough water. It is also important to note that being in a hot environment or performing physical activities will require more water consumption than usual so be sure to stay well hydrated in these situations. A simple and good habit to adopt is to carry a water bottle everywhere you go and sip on it throughout the day.

Myth #3: "Lite" olive oil is light in calories.

Have you ever wondered what the label "light" or "lite" actually means on the bottle of olive oil? It certainly does not mean that it is lower in calories since all olive oils contain the same amount of calories and fat per serving. It simply refers to the taste and color of the oil, not the caloric content.

Extra virgin olive oil is the best and purest type of oil to consume. It is produced by mechanically pressing the olives and extracting the first press of oil without the use of heat or chemical processes. The light olive oil on the other hand is actually chemically refined oil that is blended with lower quality virgin olive oil to give it back a bit of color and taste. In essence, light olive oil is poor quality oil.

Myth #4: You have to eat less to weigh less.

The eat less-weigh less principle is 100 percent false, especially if fat loss is your goal. In order to achieve fat loss and ultimately weight loss, a calorie deficit needs to occur. This means that the amount of energy you spend per day needs to be higher than the amount of

calories you consume. However, this equation does not imply starving yourself, eating one meal per day, or munching on lettuce all day long. Instead, eat nutrient dense foods (i.e. foods that offer a lot of vital nutrients) frequently throughout the day to satiate hunger and exercise daily to create a slight deficit.

If the body is not given enough calories, it will go into survival mode and hold on to your body fat as an energy reserve. Calorie deprivation also signals the release of fat-hunting enzymes called lipoprotein lipase which seek out additional fat to store. Even worse, dieting leads to water and muscle loss, which ultimately slows down the metabolism and makes it even more difficult to reduce body fat. So don't ever make the mistake of cutting your calories too low!

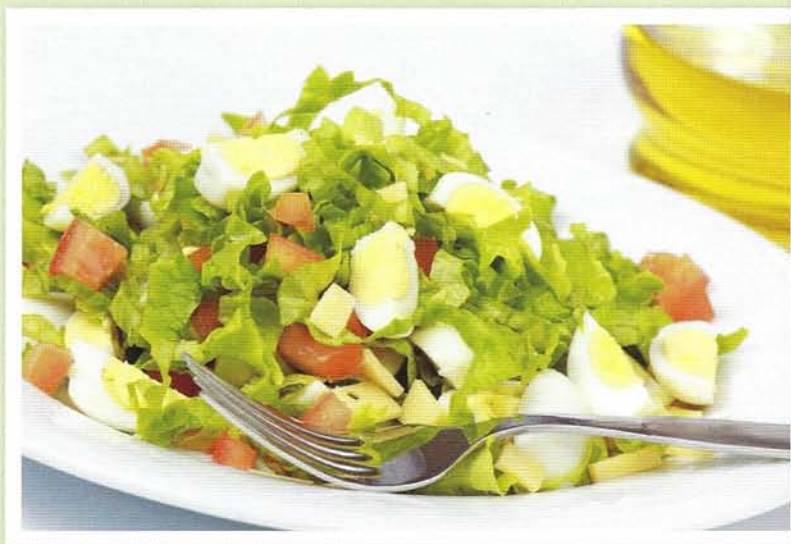
Myth #5: Decaf coffee is caffeine-free.

There are several methods for extracting caffeine from coffee, but caffeine is not

free. If you have an allergy or intolerance to caffeine, it is best to avoid all sources that contain caffeine, including decaf coffee.

Myth #6: Fast food salads are healthy options.

While many have good intentions when choosing salads from fast food outlets, most are not aware of the surprising amounts of saturated fats, calories, and sodium. For the sake of comparison, one Big Mac sandwich contains 540 calories and 1,040mg of sodium. A premium Caesar salad with grilled chicken and dressing, which may be perceived as a healthy alternative, has a whopping 410 calories and 1,390mg of sodium. The best advice is to avoid fried or crispy foods in salads, and use light dressings such as extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar sparingly as opposed to creamy sauces and dressings. Fast foods may be convenient, but not at the expense of your health! *



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removed completely with any of the methods available. In fact, international standards allow caffeine levels to be up to 2.5 percent of the product and still be labeled as decaffeinated, except for the European Union that requires decaf coffee to be at least 99.9 percent caffeine-

With summer just around the corner, make sure to attend Bernadette's final "STOP the Confusion" health and fitness lectures. The final two lectures will be held on May 2nd and June 6th, 2010. For more information call 050-283-2020 or visit www.BernaciseMe.com