

Myths & Realities About Healthy Weight Management

Trying to manage your weight? You are not alone. As many as 60% of adults are overweight or obese and many of them are trying to lose those unwanted pounds. If you are looking for advice on how to manage your weight, you can find it with ease on the Internet, in books and magazine, and in the media. However, some of that advice may be more fiction than truth. Read on to get a reality check on popular weight management myths.

Myth: Calories don't count.

Reality: Calories count and no matter where they come from, if a person eats more than their body needs they **will** gain weight. One pound is equal to about 3,500 calories. To reduce weight, we need to cut calories and increase physical activity.

Myth: Carbohydrates make people gain weight.

Reality: Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are important sources of energy our bodies need every day. The problem with carbohydrates lies in how much people eat and what they do to those carbohydrate foods. Drowning large amounts of pasta in cream sauces or loading up a baked potato with sour cream, bacon, butter, and cheese adds excess fat and calories our bodies don't need.

Myth: Snacks are bad.

Reality: Some people are able to manage their weight more easily with 5 or 6 small meals during the day instead of 3 large ones. Everyone is different. Snacks can be helpful in controlling hunger - the key is to choose nutritious snacks

that help your body meet (but not exceed) its energy needs. Snack only when you are hungry (i.e. not bored or stressed) and watch the portion sizes.

Myth: Foods like grapefruit or cabbage can help the body burn fat.

Reality: While these foods have some good nutritional value, there is no evidence to suggest that these or other foods make the body burn fat.

Myth: Drinking lots of water can help you lose weight.

Reality: Drinking more water alone probably will not help people manage their weight over the long term. However, choosing low- or no-calorie drinks (like water) instead of high calorie ones can help reduce overall calorie intake. For example, drinking water or diet soda instead of regular soda can save 150 calories per 12 ounces. Switching from whole milk to skim saves 70 calories per 8 ounces.