



# Diet Myths and Food Trends

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# THE LAST THANKSGIVING



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# Objectives

- Identify “Fad Diets” and research (or lack of research supporting them)
- Debunk popular diet myths
- Set the record straight on other popular nutrition topics and trends

# Popular Fad Diets

- Paleo
- Low Carb
- Gluten Free
- Juicing/Cleanse
- Fasting

# Nutrition Trends

- Coconut craze
- Diet pills
- Supplements
- Glycemic Index
- Strength Training – Boost protein to build muscle and increase energy...?

# What is a "Fad Diet"

- A weight loss plan or diet with some kind of quirky feature
- Gains popularity as quickly as they fall out of the lime light
- Promises rapid weight loss (>2 lbs/week)
- May be based off of loose scientific evidence... or not
- Often linked with purchasing something: supplements, shake, bars, book etc
- **Golden Rule:** If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.

# Paleo

- Heavily meat based
- Excludes nutrient rich grains, beans and low fat dairy
- Large food group exclusions can lead to weight loss (plus nutrient deficiencies)
- May produce initial health benefits but severe restrictions may not be sustainable

# Paleo

- Rapid weight loss due to decrease in calories (excluding a food group or two can do that)
- Handful of studies in support of Paleo were small and short term.
- Compared to low fat, low calorie diets Paleo lost the quickest, but after 12 weeks all evened out



# Low Carb Diets

- The Atkins Diet, Dukin Diet, South Beach
- Require restricting intake of carbs
- Work in phases, 1<sup>st</sup> phase most restrictive promoting rapid weight loss (mostly water) gradually building towards maintenance phase
- Emphasize complex carbs once allowed

# Low Carb

- Very low carb 21-70 grams/day!
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends 130 grams of carb/day as lowest target (remember carbs = brain food) typically 40-65% of calories from carbs
- Again, may be missing out on fiber and some micronutrients

# Paleo/Low Carb/High Pro

- Diets high in saturated fats increase the risk of prostate, breast, and colon cancer
- High protein diets are low in protective dietary fiber, which lowers the risk of lung, oral, esophageal, stomach and colon cancer.

\* from the American Institute for Cancer Research and the World Cancer Research Fund

# Gluten Free

- Elimination of all foods containing wheat and/or gluten
- Gluten is a type of protein found in grains like wheat, barley and rye
- People often lose weight on GF diet because they are eating less calories

# Gluten Free

- Gluten Free diet is required only in those with Celiac disease.
- Possible benefits for those with “gluten intolerance”
- No scientific evidence to support a GF diet to the general public, despite health claims
- No strong evidence to support GF for weight loss

# Juicing/Cleanse Diets

- Used as a method to “Detox” the body
- Typically short term, 1-10 days
- Consuming only raw, juiced or blended fruits and vegetables and water
- Green veggies emphasized

# Juicing/Cleanse Diets

## Pros:

- easy way to squeeze in fruits and veggies if you typically don't like them

## Cons:

- Missing out on certain nutrients that only whole produce will give you that you can't get from juice alone, including fiber
- Juicers are expensive and often difficult to clean
- Juice is a concentrated source of calories, esp if fruit > vegs
- Juice isn't pasteurized, could be a food safety hazard. Wash hands and produce thoroughly

# Fasting

- Historically used for religious reasons
- Used to lose weight or cleanse body of toxins
- Some fasting diets involve only drinking water and raw foods for a period of one or more days
- No evidence that fasting detoxes the body or that your body needs to be “detoxified”.



# Coconut Craze

- Coconut is more saturated than butter!
- Coconut oil can raise good chol (HDL) but it also raises bad (LDL).
- Coconut water – unflavored is low in sugar and calories, contains electrolytes
- Use Coconut water instead of juice in your morning smoothie
- Use Coconut oil on skin and hair, use in cooking sparingly

# Diet pills

- No quick fix
- Under MD supervision
- Must learn how to eat healthy, exercise to keep weight off once in maintenance phase

# Supplements

- Meeting your macro and micro nutrient needs with foods first is most ideal.
- Supplements can't take the place of the variety of foods that are important to a healthy diet
- Some stages in your life where supplementation may be required:  
Calcium, folate, B12, Vitamin D

# Supplements

- Check with your health care provider about the supplements you take if you are scheduled to have any type of surgical procedure
- Let your health care providers (including doctors, pharmacists, and dietitians) know which dietary supplements you're taking so that you can discuss what's best for your overall health.

# Supplements

- References:

NIH Office of Dietary supplements

<http://ods.od.nih.gov/>

# Glycemic Index

- The glycemic index or GI, measures how a carbohydrate containing food raises blood glucose. Foods are ranked.
- A food with a high GI raises blood glucose more than a food with a medium or low GI.
- Can be used as helpful tool to manage diabetes when combined with carb counting.

# Glycemic Index

- Foods ranked by the glycemic index are given scores:
- **High: 70 and up.** Examples include instant white rice, brown rice, plain white bread, white skinless baked potato, boiled red potatoes with skin and watermelon.
- **Medium: 56 to 69.** Examples include sweet corn, bananas, raw pineapple, raisins and certain types of ice cream.
- **Low: 55 and under.** Examples include raw carrots, peanuts, raw apple, grapefruit, peas, skim milk, kidney beans and lentils.

# Glycemic Index

- One major concern with the glycemic index is that it ranks foods in isolation. But in reality, how your body absorbs and handles carbs depends on many factors, including how much you eat; how the food is ripened, processed or prepared; the time of day it's eaten; other foods you eat it with; and health conditions you may have, such as diabetes.



# Strength Training

- **Claim:** Boost protein to build muscle and increase energy...
- **Truth:** Protein alone does not build muscle mass. Strength training plus calories from healthy varied diet, recovery time and sleep are also needed to build muscle.

# Boost Metabolism

- The # 1 thing you can do to boost your metabolic rate is to **EXERCISE**
- Working out builds muscle
- Muscle speeds metabolism
- As the body works more efficiently, it processes food faster.

# Protein in the athlete

- While protein needs of both endurance and power athletes are greater than that of non-athletes, they're not as high as commonly perceived.
- The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Dietitians of Canada and the American College of Sports Medicine recommend the following for power and endurance athletes, based on body weight:
  - Power athletes (strength or speed): 1.2 to 1.7 grams/kilogram a day
  - Endurance athletes: 1.2 to 1.4 grams/kilogram a day

# Protein in the athlete

- For an adult male athlete, that's about 84 to 119 grams of protein a day; for adult females about 66 to 94 grams.
- By comparison, a sedentary adult male needs about 56 grams of protein a day; for females it's about 46 grams.

# Red Flags

- Promise **quick** weight loss
- **Eliminate** entire food groups
- Use **testimonials** from famous people
- **Sell** supplements, drinks, plans
- They can be **critical and skeptical** of the scientific community

# What works?

- Weight Loss tips from A-Z handout
- Strategies associated with successful weight loss:
  - Weekly weigh ins
  - Eating breakfast
  - Decreased fast food intake
  - Increased activity
  - Decreased portion sizes
  - Journaling

# What works?

**It's as simple as:  
Calories in < Calories Out**

- What the calories are matters.
- It takes reducing calorie needs by 500 -1,000 calories each day to lose 1-2 pounds/week.
- Most people don't miss ~ 200 calories/day, but more than that can feel a little depriving.
- Move more!



BEFORE



AFTER



AFTER  
THE AFTER

CORDING





# Thank You!

- Questions?