

NO TRICKS THIS APRIL FOOLS': DEBUNKING COMMON FOOD & NUTRITION MYTHS

Hello and Happy Spring! Did you know that some individuals used to believe that April Fools' Day started on the first day of Spring because they thought they were being fooled by Mother Nature with the sudden changes in weather? And while April Fools' Day is typically viewed as a day to prank or trick others, we're here this month to help you debunk some common myths around food and nutrition and provide tips to help you feel more confident.

MYTH #1: "IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE TO EAT HEALTHY."

With the cost of food continually rising, it can feel overwhelming trying to maintain your health without breaking the bank. However, a key to budget-friendly grocery shopping is planning ahead...

- Plan meals that use similar ingredients or items you already have to shorten your grocery list.
- Check store flyers for sales and coupons. Stock up on pantry staples that have a long shelf life.
- When it comes to produce, shop seasonally. Consider canned or frozen fruits and vegetables as an alternative to fresh when out of season or not on sale. Avoid items with added sugar or salt.

MYTH #2: "YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP YOUR FAVORITE FOODS TO LOSE WEIGHT"

No need to deprive yourself entirely... Small amounts of your favorite high-calorie foods can still be a part of your weight-loss plan. Remember, it's what you do consistently over a long period of time that is going to affect your health the most. Keep track of the total calories you take in and adjust throughout the day to incorporate your favorite treats.

- To lose weight, you must burn more calories than you take in through food *and beverages*.
- There are additional factors that may affect your ability to lose weight. If you're having difficulties, be sure to reach out and express concerns to your physician.

MYTH #3: "LEFTOVERS ARE SAFE TO EAT UNTIL THEY START TO SMELL BAD"

There are different types of bacteria – some cause serious illnesses while others do not. Bacteria known to cause illness do not affect the taste, appearance, or smell of food. That's why it's so important to freeze or throw out leftovers that have been sitting in your refrigerator within 3-4 days.

- Factors that increase risk for food poisoning include being aged 65 years or older and having a weakened immune system. If you can't remember how long your leftovers have been in your refrigerator, don't risk it... *Remember: if in doubt, throw it out!*
- Leftovers can be stored in your freezer for 3-4 months. Although safe indefinitely, foods stored in your freezer for a long period of time may begin to lose moisture in flavor.
- Reheat safely stored leftovers to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

MYTH #4: "INTENSE EXERCISE IS THE ONLY WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT"

Exercise *can support* weight loss when we consume less calories. But regardless, regular exercise can lead to better health by lowering your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

The recommendation for adults is 150 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity.

- Moderate intensity exercises include dancing, walking up and down stairs, or brisk walking.
- Decide how you want to be active and choose activities that match your abilities.
- Remember: Any type and amount of physical activity is better than none.
- Get your friends and family involved to make it more enjoyable!

