

Dispel Nutritional Myths

ROSEMONT, ILL. — The New Year is a good time to refresh your nutrition knowledge. Learn the facts, and get off to a healthy start in 1990! Begin by dispelling some of those rumors you always hear, but wonder if there's any truth to them.

Myth: Imitation — Equal to Real?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration defines the word "imitation" to mean "nutritionally inferior." That is, the food is lower in protein, vitamins or minerals than its standard counterpart. For example, imitation cheese, even if it meets the FDA protein quality standards, still may not match the protein quality of real cheese, nor may it equal real cheese in vitamin and mineral content.

Myth: Light or Lite

When these terms are used on food labels for products other than meat or poultry, they can mean anything from lighter in color or texture to less sodium, fat or calories. But, when used on meat or poultry products, the product contains either no more than 10 percent fat or has at least 25 percent less fat than similar products.

Become a smart label reader by understanding what these terms mean.

Myth: Snacking — A Bad Habit

Snacking doesn't have to be a "bad" habit. Many of us consume about 20 percent of the day's calories in snacks, a statistic which can reflect a healthy eating style when snacks are chosen wisely. Raw vegetables, fruits, whole grain muffins, cheese and yogurt are good choices and give the body needed nutrients as well as energy when eaten as part of a balanced diet.

Myth: Milk Is for Kids

Milk is for all age groups. Children and adults alike need milk and other dairy products daily. Dairy products supply key nutrients including calcium, riboflavin and protein which contribute to strong bones and teeth, healthy skin and good vision. The newly released Recommended Dietary Allowances recommends a higher intake of calcium even after people reach their full height. The new RDAs suggest 1200 mg of calcium per day from age 11 through age 24, instead of through age 18 as previously recom-

mended. The RDA for adults 25 and older is 800 mg per day, which is equivalent to approximately three servings of milk or milk products daily.

Myth: Pregnancy - Eating for Two?

A pregnant woman is often said to be "eating for two." However, this does not mean that she should eat twice as much. Actually, a pregnant woman only needs an extra 300 calories a day to meet her increased nutrient requirements. Calcium needs also increase during pregnancy. Pregnant women need 1200 mg calcium per day, the amount found in just one quart of milk.

Myth: Cholesterol Only Comes from the Foods We Eat

Yes, we do get cholesterol from some of the foods we eat, but our bodies also manufacture cholesterol - whether we eat foods containing cholesterol or not! The body needs a certain amount of cholesterol to carry out a number of vital functions including the formation of nervous system tissue, Vitamin D and hormones.

Myth: Pizza - Not a Well-Balanced Meal

Although pizza continues to be a favorite among fast foods, it can be a healthy food choice as well. A typical slice of thin crust pizza contains less than 30 percent fat and almost 60 percent carbohydrates, and it provides other important nutrients as well. There's calcium and protein from the cheese, and by selecting toppings such as lean meat and vegetables, pizza can also provide a variety of vitamins and minerals while incorporating foods from all four food groups in one serving.

Myth: Dessert Is A "No-No"

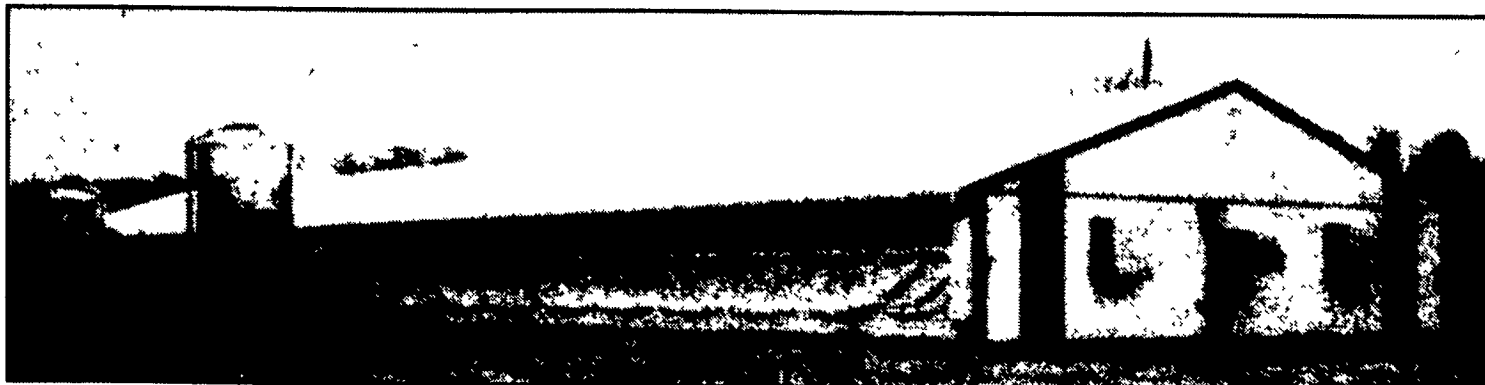
Not true: For most of us (unless a serious health problem is involved), no food should be totally off-limits. Desserts can be part of a balanced diet that includes foods from the four food groups. Try to learn about the nutritional content of your favorite desserts - all desserts are not created equal. A one-cup serving of frozen yogurt or ice cream, for example, provides approximately 20 percent of the U.S. RDA for calcium. A piece of chocolate cake, however, provides only a small percentage of nutrients.

Myth: Coffee Creamers - Fewer Calories than Cream?

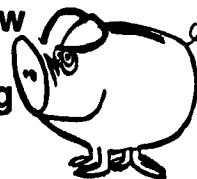
Both non-dairy coffee whiteners and real half-and-half cream have 20 calories per tablespoon. But, some non-dairy coffee creamers are made with tropical oils, so they are high in saturated fat. Instead, opt for real dairy products, some of which, such as milk, are lower in fat and calories than non-dairy coffee creamers. In addition to great dairy flavor, you'll get the nutrient benefits that only real dairy products provide.

Myth: Quick Weight Loss Diets - Magic?

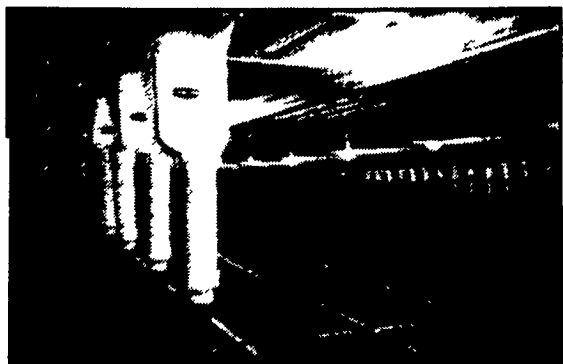
You've heard of the grapefruit diet and others purported to magically "melt" the pounds away. Don't be taken in by these fad diets. No food or pill yet developed can burn up fat! The only way to lose weight is through a program that controls calories and includes exercise.



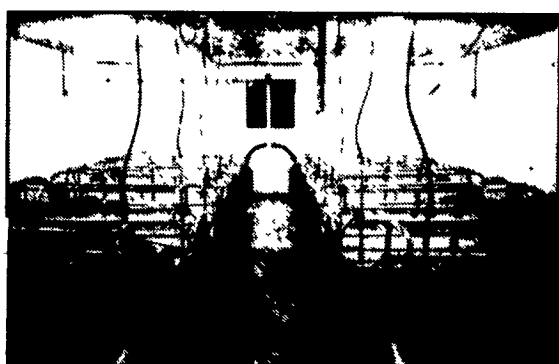
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