

Food \$ense

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Avoid Nutrition Myths

There are many diet and food related ideas circulating in the media and among the general public. Beliefs that are not scientifically supported by sound research create confusion and make choosing a healthy eating plan a difficult task.



Use these tips to help determine if the nutrition advice you are getting is a myth or fact.

Tip #1: Look at the Source

Unbiased sources that base recommendations on extensive research are the best sources of information. One resource that nutrition professionals use is the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines are reviewed and updated every five years by experts in the nutrition field. To find the Dietary Guidelines, go

online to
www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp

Tip #2: Use Common Sense

If a belief or claim seems too good to be true, it probably is! Eliminating entire food groups or eating one particular food will not get you all the nutrition you need.

Tip #3: Seek More Information

If you are unsure about a new recommendation or idea, contact a nutrition professional. Your local UW-Extension office is a great first step to helping you find sound research on the topic at hand. Speaking to a registered dietitian is also a great source of good information.

Bottom Line: Look into nutrition advice before jumping on the latest bandwagon.

Source: *University of Missouri Extension, Avoid Nutrition and Diet Myths with Scientific Facts*

Pita Bread Pizza

A simple twist on a tasty favorite!



- 1 whole wheat pita bread
- 2-3 Tablespoons pizza sauce
- Fresh vegetables as desired (up to 1/2 cup) - try mushrooms, peppers, broccoli, carrots or onion
- 1/3 cup shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese

Tips: Try tomato sauce in place of pizza sauce. Add cooked meat to pizza or top with drained canned pineapple in 100% juice.

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Lay pita bread on baking sheet. Spread pizza sauce over pita bread, leaving 1/4-inch around the edge uncovered.
3. Arrange assorted vegetables over sauce. Top with meat or pineapple, if desired. Sprinkle cheese evenly over toppings.
4. Bake until cheese is melted and golden, approximately 8 to 10 minutes.

Makes 1 serving.

Source: *Iowa State University Extension*

Myth: Organic is healthier than non-organic.

Organic food differs from traditional produced food in the way it is grown, handled, and processed. Organic food is produced without using most common pesticides and fertilizers. The U.S. Department of Agriculture makes no claims that organically produced food is safer or more nutritious than conventionally produced food.



Studies comparing organically grown food with conventionally grown food found very little difference between the two. They showed:

- No difference in the amount of vitamins.
- No difference in protein or fat content between organic and conventional milk.
- Organic produce generally has a lower risk of pesticide contamination, but are not necessarily 100% free of pesticides.

Both organic and conventionally grown fruits and vegetables, as well as lean proteins, have health benefits that will help you and your family for years to come. Weigh the proposed health benefits, environmental benefits, and cost to determine which choice is best for you.

Source: *Arizona Cooperative Extension, Organically grown foods vs. non-organically grown foods*

Myth: Don't put hot foods in the refrigerator.

Hot food can be placed directly in the refrigerator. But...

Cool in shallow containers. A large pot of food like soup or stew should be divided into small portions and put in shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator. Use containers like 13 x 9 pans that are no more than 3-4 inches deep for quick cooling. Once cooled, you can transfer to a larger container for storage. Store, covered, in the refrigerator.

Always follow the "two hour rule." Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours at a refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below. If left out in a room or outdoors where the temperature is 90°F or hotter, food should be refrigerated or discarded within just one hour.



When in doubt, throw it out! Food is not safe to eat after sitting out at room temperature for more than two hours. Bacteria grow rapidly in the *Danger Zone* (between 40°F & 140°F).

Source: *Partnership for Food Safety Education*

Turkey (or Chicken) and Noodles

Try using your leftover turkey for this dish!



- 8 ounces dry noodles
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 Tablespoon margarine or vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 1/2 cups cooked, cubed turkey or chicken
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 (10.5 ounce) can cream of chicken soup
- 6 ounces plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt

Makes 8 servings.

1. Cook noodles according to directions on package. Drain.
2. Sauté onion in margarine in large, heavy saucepan.
3. Stir in water, turkey, pepper, and cream of chicken soup.
4. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in yogurt and noodles; heat thoroughly.
5. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers.

Tips: Freeze in individual portions for a quick lunch or supper. Add peas, green beans, broccoli, or other favorite vegetables.

Source: *Iowa State University Extension*

Myth: Supplements are needed to get required vitamins.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans make it clear that your nutritional needs should be met mainly through your diet.

Supplements (vitamin pills) aren't intended to be a food substitute because they can't copy all of the nutrients and benefits of whole foods, such as fruits and vegetables.

If you're generally healthy and eat a wide variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, low-fat dairy products, lean meats and fish, you likely don't need vitamins.



However, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend supplements in the following situations:

- Women who are or may become pregnant.
- Adults age 50 or older who aren't getting enough Vitamin B-12 in fortified foods.
- People who don't eat well or eat less than 1,600 calories a day.
- Vegans or vegetarians who eat a limited variety of foods.
- Women who experience heavy bleeding during their menstrual period.
- People with a medical condition that affects how their body absorbs or uses nutrients.
- People who are not able to digest and absorb nutrients properly.

Talk to your doctor or a dietitian about which vitamins and what doses might be right for you. Be sure to ask about possible side effects and interactions with any medications you take.

Source: *Mayo Clinic*



Dear Sue Keeney...

Meet Sue Keeney--your source of research-based information about nutrition and health! Readers of all ages like Sue's practical tips on eating for good health, stretching the food dollar & more!

Submit your question to Sue Keeney at fyi.uwex.edu/foodsense/ask-sue-keeney/

Dear Sue,

I had a friend tell me that she started using coconut milk in place of cow's milk after reading that it is better for you. Is this a good idea?

Ione A. Kow

Dear Ione,

Even though it contains the word *milk*, coconut milk is a non-dairy beverage. It is considered an *oil* in U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food-A-Pedia resource due to its high level of fat, most of which is saturated fat.

Your friend may have been referring to some studies that have shown health benefits of coconut fats, such as antioxidant properties and increases in HDL (good) cholesterol.

The amount of fat in coconut milk makes it high in calories, which can lead to weight gain. An 8 oz glass of coconut milk has over 550 calories and 57 grams of fat. There are lower fat and calorie varieties available. In addition, coconut milk has less amounts of some important nutrients found in cow's milk, such as protein and calcium.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting saturated fats to less than 10% of your total calories. To meet this goal, low-fat or fat-free cow's milk would be a good choice. Keep in mind that a healthy diet does contain a variety of foods, so coconut milk can be included in moderation.

Sue

Sources: *United States Department of Agriculture Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

Myth: FoodShare Wisconsin is only for unemployed.

FoodShare Wisconsin was created to help people with limited money buy the food they need for good health. Some people think that it is only for people who are unemployed.

Each month, families across Wisconsin get help from FoodShare. They are people of all ages who:

- Have a job but have low incomes.
- Are living on small or fixed incomes.
- Have lost their job.
- Are retired.
- Are disabled and not able to work.

If you want to find out if you can get FoodShare benefits, call the 800 number in the section below or apply online at access.wisconsin.gov. This website can also help you learn if you may be eligible for benefits.

Source: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare

Kids in the Kitchen...

Myth: Kids won't eat veggies.

Every parent knows the key to keeping children healthy is to get them to put down the junk food and eat more vegetables, but this is often more easily said than done. Try these simple tips to get your kids to love veggies:

- **Smile!** Modeling healthy eating by not only eating vegetables around your kids, but clearly showing you enjoy them is important.
- **Buy more vegetables.** If your kitchen is filled with vegetables instead of less healthy snacks, your kids will be more likely to grab the carrots instead of the chips.
- **Let kids have a say.** When kids can help decide what vegetable to try, they will feel more involved and more excited to eat them.

Find more ideas at www.extension.org!

Source: *eXtension Foundation*

GOAL: Choose one new recipe to try this week.

MyPlate Tip

Find ways to save money at the grocery store.



WNEP education is supported by the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), UW-Extension, FoodShare Wisconsin, and local partners. In Wisconsin, FoodShare can help provide a healthy diet. To find out more about FoodShare, call 715-395-1304 or go to <http://access.wisconsin.gov>. To learn more about the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program in your county, please contact:

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