

# Myths and Legends Exposed

**Dietary facts that can change your life forever**

## **PART 1**

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## What this book is about

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This e-book is brought to you in manageable parts exclusively by [4nothingDirect.com](http://4nothingDirect.com). This first part explodes some of the myths and legends of diet and will, hopefully, give you a better insight into the food we eat and how it affects our physical well being. Check back on our website periodically to obtain future chapters. Collect them all and start enjoying a healthier lifestyle today. If you have any comments about this publication, please send them to [ebooks@4nothingdirect.com](mailto:ebooks@4nothingdirect.com).

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In this day and age it seems that everyone has become obsessed with fitness, exercise and losing weight. Probably never before in the history of mankind has the human race become so educated on matters of weight-loss, diet and healthy lifestyle – but, are we deluding ourselves. Are we really getting healthier or are we simply pandering to the commercial interests of big business? Think about it for a while. Health clubs, gyms and weight-loss clubs have mushroomed all over the world. They earn billions from our one single fear of being overweight or unhealthy. Food manufacturers spend millions on making our food less palatable than Mother Nature intended, but then charge us a hefty premium to buy organic food produced just as nature intended us to eat it. Then there are all those so-called diet foods. All sorts of things from biscuits, milk shakes and ready made diet meals, all the way up to appetite suppressing drugs and potions that are designed to stop us eating too much. Then there is the home exercise machine industry. They produce a multitude of fascinating ways for us to exercise in the comfort of our own home. Fold-away exercise bikes, skiing and rowing machines, ab-machines and those somewhat ineffective electronic devices that make our muscles twitch uncontrollably as though they had a mind of their own. Given the high prices of some of these machines, most people would be better off joining a gym and have the added benefit of group exercise and friendly encouragement.

Now don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with exercise and fitness. Becoming a member of a health club can be highly beneficial and rewarding – it can make you feel good and probably introduce you to a new circle of friends. Weight loss clubs can often be the catalyst that we need to really get motivated into shedding those extra kilos. Home gym equipment can also be highly beneficial as long as you stick to using it instead of forgetting about it and locking it away in a cupboard after the first few weeks. But, there is one thing you should know. Exercise in itself is NOT the answer to losing weight – or more specifically losing fat. Exercise is for building muscle tissue, increasing heart rate and generally keeping your circulatory system in good condition. So, whilst exercise is good for you, it is not the answer for someone who simply wants to shed excess fat from their body.

Diet foods and supplements can also give us the false impression that they will help us lose weight and fat. The sad truth is many don't. Many contain sugar and most diet plans based on these foods prevent us from eating a normal healthy diet. In a widely promoted television survey in the UK which compared the effectiveness of various diet plans, less than 5% of participants actually gained any significant fat-loss benefits which could be sustained beyond the end of the plan period. The conclusion of the Diet Trials TV program was that whilst healthy eating and exercise was generally

good for you, purchasing a pre-packaged, commercial plan was not necessarily the answer to a maiden's prayer. As for all those expensive pills and potions that we are constantly bombarded with on TV marketing programs, there is very little in the way of scientific research that suggests that these things actually help people in their weight-loss or fat-burning efforts. Like pre-packaged diet foods, many pills and potions are more psychological than real. If they were real, the medical profession would be pumping them into high risk heart patients to help reduce the stress on their hearts caused by being overweight. Instead, the health industry adopt the more time consuming, but effective, method of putting their patients on a healthy, balanced diet which is sustainable for many, many years.

So, what we hope to reveal in this book are the many myths and legends of weight loss and dieting. We will tell you why certain methods work and why many don't. We will tell you what is healthy for you and we will explain the best way to get yourself into tip-top shape without all the expense and effort that the commercial world will have you believe is necessary. But first, a word of warning.

Putting young, healthy children on a good diet from an early age will result in huge health benefits during their lifetime. It will be like any other form of education – it will stay with them for life and hopefully give them a longer, healthier life than if you simply pump them full of fast-foods every day and then leave them to discover the wisdom of good diet later on in life. However, if you are one of the millions of overweight people around the world who have to be re-educated after many years of unhealthy eating, then there are some precautions that you must observe before embarking on a lifestyle change involving diet. Make sure you are healthy enough to withstand the impact on your body. If you are already significantly overweight, there could be other medical factors that could have caused your weight problem. Even if medical factors did not cause you to be overweight in the first place, your excess weight may well have created conditions that need to be professionally examined before embarking on a dietary regime. It is, therefore, essential that you consult with a physician if you fall into this category BEFORE changing your lifestyle. Have your physician give you a good once-over to make sure that there is nothing preventing you from embarking on a significant change in diet. Whilst you are undertaking your medical check-up, ask specifically if there are any “must have” foods that you should continue eating. This is particularly important for diabetics. Only when you know you have the medical capability of sustaining a diet change should you consider our recommendations. Likewise, if you suffer any ill-effects during your diet change, always consult with you physician to make sure any unusual ailment isn't connected with dietary change. By following this simple advice and following the recommendations in this book, you could become healthier and fitter than you ever thought possible, and in a very short space of time.

## ***Exploding the Myths***

Over the years the medical profession have undertaken considerable research into the causes of obesity and methods by which people can lose weight. But even armed with masses of medical research, doctors all over the world still have a degree of disagreement over what is good and what is bad for us. Furthermore, there have been a whole myriad of methods developed for measuring the effectiveness of specific diet

plans. At the end of the day, the only real test is whether a particular diet yielded a satisfactory result for the individual. Below is a list of favourite myths that have evolved from this seemingly endless string of dietary fads, and the real truth behind them.

## **Cholesterol is bad for you?**

Cholesterol is a natural product produced by the body to strengthen your arteries. Without cholesterol we would weaken our arteries to the point where they could break, causing severe haemorrhaging and a whole host of other undesirable problems. So, how can cholesterol be bad for you? Well, it's like any other bodily overproduction problem – if you make too much of something, its going to have an unpleasant side effect. However, that doesn't automatically suggest that we should eliminate the substances that create the product from our body altogether. Take for example the production of urine. This is the by-product produced by our body to eliminate waste fluid and toxins. Now if you had a problem in your urinary tract that prevented the discharge of urine from the body, would we automatically say that water was bad for us? Of course not. The problem would be a medical problem that would have to be medically corrected. No doctor in his right mind would simply tell a patient to stop drinking water.

It's much the same with cholesterol. If your body produces too much cholesterol, it's a medical condition for which you would have to seek medical assistance to redress. If you don't, you run the risk of getting clogged arteries and possibly a heart attack. Part of your treatment may well include the reduction of cholesterol producing foods in your diet, leaving your body to produce what is needed to protect your arteries. But to cut out cholesterol from your diet when there is no medical reason to do so may create problems of its own. You see, the body makes cholesterol and if you cut out cholesterol from your diet altogether, the body will simply go into over-production mode to compensate for the deficiency in your diet. Over time your body may well get stuck in overdrive and leave you exposed to all the risks of heart problems. Your only choice then will be to seek medical help to reduce the amount of cholesterol in your blood stream.

We are not suggesting for one moment that everyone should go out and start stuffing themselves with high-cholesterol foods, but like most things in life, balance is the key. If you like butter on your bread – eat it. If you like a little fat on your meat – go ahead and enjoy. Just don't make high cholesterol foods the mainstay of your diet. Obviously, if you have a medical condition that requires you cut down, or eliminate high cholesterol foods from your diet, than that is what you have to do. Remember, you're more likely to suffer a heart attack from overindulging in smoking and drinking than you are by eating fatty meats for your Sunday lunch. So, don't get obsessed with all the commercial hype about cholesterol. Trust your doctor to advise you on whether you need to reduce cholesterol intake. Even better, take a bi-annual blood test to check out your levels to make sure they are within healthy norms.

## **You can TARGET fat loss through exercise.**

Don't believe a word of it! We've all seen those ads on TV for machines that target the waistline. We all know about those magical "thigh busters" and so-called "bun-burners". And of course, we can't possibly have avoided seeing those ads for miraculous battery operated boxes that target fat reduction around our waist, legs, arms and just about everywhere else where fat normally accumulates. These advertisements are simply playing on our fears and our desire to be slim and muscular. You can see clearly how they do it. First they show you the "before" picture of some "beer-bellied" monster, then they show you the "after" picture of a world champion body builder with abs of steel. Ok, they may well be pictures of the same guy, but one thing is for sure; that guy didn't get into shape simply by plugging himself into a muscle twitching piece of electronics while he watched a football game on TV! Likewise, the lady with the fat butt didn't get those new cellulite-free buns by doing a few "targeted" exercises in between doing the household chores. So, what are all these machines good for?

Well, they're good for your general well being. They actually do exercise your muscles, helping to develop muscle tissue and, at the same time, increasing your heart rate – keeping your circulatory system in good shape. Even those little electronic devices have a useful role to play. There are many people who are unable to participate in normal exercise due to disabilities, age or bodily injuries. For these people, muscle twitching electronics can help them keep their muscle tissue healthy by giving them an occasional "electronic" work-out. But to promote these machines as some sort of magical targeted fat burners is a complete nonsense.

The truth is that fat builds up on the body wherever it can. Likewise, fat can only be lost universally – not selectively. Supposedly targeting your belly with exercise isn't necessarily going to reduce your waistline. If the exercise you have chosen actually does burn fat at all, it will burn fat from the whole of your body. In fact, by targeting exercise to specific parts of your body, you are definitely likely to develop good solid muscle tissue, but you probably won't be able to see it because of the layer of fat covering it. Therefore, exercise should only be part of your regime if your objective is to lose fat; otherwise, you simply won't see the results you were expecting.

## ***Counting on Calories***

Calorie counting has been the mainstay of most diets for as long as I can remember. To think that someone can sit down and start calculating how many calories are in each food item we eat, and then restrict themselves to only consuming a set number of calories each day is bordering on the ridiculous. A calorie is a measure of energy – not a measure of weight or fat gain. Everybody needs calories to survive. Without taking in energy we wouldn't be able to expend energy by going about our daily lives. Think about it. A car gets its energy from petroleum. By starving our cars of this vital energy, we are not going to make it into a leaner, meaner driving machine. The same is true of our bodies. The secret here is to expend the energy we take into our bodies. If we don't get this balance correct, we end up storing the excess energy in the form

of fat. Unfortunately, simply cutting our energy intake doesn't always equal less body fat. A person who has a physically demanding job will have to have a greater intake of calories than a person who sits around all day doing nothing. So there can be no general rule of thumb. This is one of the reasons why pre-packed diet meals fail miserably. Mrs Diet goes off to the supermarket and decides that Mr Diet is a fat pig and needs to lose some weight. So being the caring wife she is, she decides to start feeding the whole family specially prepared diet meals. She diligently buys 3 meals for herself, hubby and Diet junior and takes them home for the evening meal. Having stuck the 3 mysterious boxes in the microwave for a few minutes, she lays them out on the table, where the Diet family sit in amazement at the three miniscule portions of chicken breast in some fancy sauce with a sprinkling of vegetables strategically placed around the dish. Within two minutes, Mr Diet has scoffed the lot in one mouthful, whilst Diet Junior is pulling faces because he was looking forward to a big-mac whopper dog burger with a plateful of chips. Meanwhile, Mrs Diet is happily nibbling away at her new-found, labour-saving meal with delight. You see, the problem with diet meals is they are designed for the average person. Unfortunately, there is no such thing when it comes to calorie intake. In our example, Mr. Diet may well be a huge monster of a guy who's been digging up coal on a 12 hour shift. He has obviously expended more energy during his working day than Mrs. Diet. Diet Junior is still young and his body is telling him what type of food he needs to eat. Unfortunately, the chicken in fancy sauce isn't doing it for him. Mrs. Diet, on the other hand is probably quite happy with her "average female" size portion of food.

The sad truth is that for the price of just one of these specially prepared diet meals, Mrs Diet could have bought three normal sized chicken breasts and a few kilos of fresh vegetables and prepared a more satisfying meal for her family. She could have sized the family portions to better meet the demands of each person, and even have prepared Junior's meal in a style that would have been more palatable for his expectations.

Diet foods are just normal foods that have been portion-controlled to provide a specific number of calories. They also tend to contain high levels of sugar (a way to combat the feeling of hunger) as well as various additives and preservatives to ensure a longer shelf life. They are not "magic" foods that help you lose weight. They are just small portions of basic foods that do little to satisfy appetite. Our advice is to stay away from them unless you are a small eater and you can't be bothered to cook yourself a balanced meal each day. However, if you fall into this category you would be better to force yourself to cook each day if only for the sake of your wallet. Furthermore, the energy you expend moving around the kitchen to prepare your meal may be sufficient to burn off those calories that you do subsequently consume.

## **Eat only Lean Meat**

Well this is a debatable point and really takes us back to the cholesterol issue. Unless there is a valid medical reason for only eating virtually fat-free meats, then I would advise against it. The reason is simple. Fat is required in the cooking of meat. It imparts flavour, keeps the meat moist, and therefore, helps you to more easily deal with it when it comes to eating it. Of course, you don't have to eat the fat, but you should always use it in the cooking process. There is a tendency now days for

butchers to strip the fat from meat before selling it. This means that you have to add some form of fat, oil or cooking juice to make the meat palatable. Of course, I'm not advocating serving up lashings of meat dripping with mounds of fat. What I am saying is develop a sensible approach to cooking meat. If necessary, use one of the hot-air systems of cooking so that the excess fat can drain away while keeping the meat moist and flavoursome. Before serving meat (particularly roasting joints) leave the meat to stand for at least 20 minutes before serving. This not only allows juices to be re-absorbed into the meat – making it more tender, but also allows surplus fat to drain off. Just before serving, you can even strip off the layer of fat from the surface of the meat just so that no one will be tempted to eat it. Even the humble chicken tastes better when cooked with its skin still firmly attached to its body. However, you can still cook it healthier by standing it on end before putting it in the oven. There are many useful wire frames and dishes specifically for this purpose. Such devices ensure the fat drains through the meat (keeping it moist) and finally dripping into a dish under the poultry.

Removing fat from the meat cooking process is likely to create a lot of discontent at your family mealtimes. Meat will be dry, tough, chewy and devoid of flavour. This will leave people hungry for more food and will therefore defeat the object of avoiding the fat in the first place.

## **Avoid Salad Dressings**

What! This is like having sex with all your clothes on – it may give momentary pleasure but it doesn't quite please all of the senses. The whole point of food is that it must satisfy if it is going to be effective at filling you up. Therefore, food must be satisfying and filling. Salad dressings do just that. There is absolutely nothing unhealthy about a slug of olive oil mixed with a little lemon juice, yet a salad dressing made from these two ingredients can make a big difference to the satisfaction value of an otherwise plain salad. I will admit that commercial, ready made salad dressings may contain a number of undesirable ingredients including sugar, colouring preservatives, and whatever else they throw into the mix. But even these won't do you much harm given the relatively small quantity that's mixed into a salad.

## **Don't eat starchy foods**

This is a real mind boggler. Most of Asia lives on a staple diet that includes a high proportion of rice, yet this is a high starch product. The strange thing is there is a higher proportion of slimmer people in Asia than there is in most western countries, so they must be doing something right. Potatoes are also high in starch, but these too are high in nutritional value. These types of food also have that important satisfaction element; they make you feel full. So why avoid them?

## **Avoid sugar**

Well, here I can agree with the statement. However, I agree not because sugar makes you fat in itself, but because it can lull you into a false sense of security. All sugars,

including honey and artificial sweeteners, fool your body into thinking it's full. Unfortunately, you soon get hungry again and so you start eating more. A prime example of this is low calorie soft drinks. Instead of sugar, these drinks contain sweeteners. Ok, they're zero calorie drinks but they make you hungry. The reason for this is they contain absolutely no solids so your body gets the sweetener and is expecting the solids to follow. When this doesn't happen you start to feel hungry. I've heard desperate mothers talking about their children's love of soft drinks and the fact that these drinks are making their kids obese. So what do they do? They switch them to zero calorie versions only to find there is no difference in the kid's ability to pile on the kilos. You see, the child's love of sweet drinks is fuelling his appetite for solid food. So, kids being kids, the quick fix to this problem is to nip into the nearest fast food restaurant to pig-out on burgers or pizza.

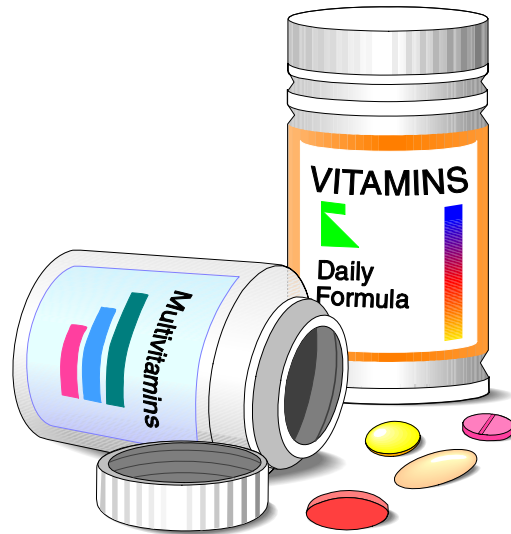
### ***What's the bottom line?***

Well, if you listen to every myth about diet and weight loss you would eat absolutely nothing. This of course would be absurd. So, our initial advice is to eat virtually anything that is designed for human consumption. Yes, even your favourite brand of fast food burgers, fried chicken and thick-crust pizza is ok. The only thing you should do is moderate and balance the foods you eat so that you get a good all-round intake of all the nutrients your body needs. To help you on your way until the next chapter of this book, we've included a chart that lists the vitamins that you should include in your diet. There is also a note on the source of those vitamins, their function in your body and the effects of deficiency. With this simple chart you should be able to start getting the right foods in your cupboard to start preparing more healthy family meals.

One other thing that you may like to start doing is changing how and when you eat. Simply take the volume of food your family eats already, and divide it into 6 meals a day instead of the normal three. This will help you digest food more easily and reduce the chances of fat creation. Also, DON'T drink water WITH your meal. Drink before meals (at least 20 minutes before). This will "lubricate" your digestive system and prepare it for the influx of food you are going to eat. Drinking with a meal tends to turn us into lazy eaters. The presence of liquids in our mouth while we eat tends to make us chew less and thus give our digestive system a harder job to do. Whilst on the subject of eating, always try whenever possible to sit at a table to eat. When you eat, chew your food thoroughly before swallowing – take your time. You will find you food is more satisfying, more easily digested and less likely to hang around getting converted to surplus fat. By following these few simple rules, and without even changing the food you currently eat, you will be well on your way to more healthy eating.

In the next chapter, we shall start looking at the type of regime that you can introduce to yourself and your family to help REDUCE existing fat in your body. Believe me, it won't be difficult, there will be few, if any, sacrifices and you won't have to push yourself into doing hours of physical exercise. Now take a look at the chart on the next page and start preparing your shopping list for the coming week.

# Vitamins in Your Diet



Vitamin	Source	Function	Deficiency Symptoms
<b>Water Soluble</b>			
B1, thiamin	Liver, legumes, yeast, whole grains	Coenzyme in cellular respiration	Berberi, fatigue, loss of appetite
B2, riboflavin	Eggs, dairy foods, green leafy vegetables, organ meats	Coenzyme in cellular respiration (in FAD and FMN)	Lesions in corners of mouth, eye irritation, skin disorders
Niacin (nicotinamide, nicotinic acid)	Liver, meat, fowl, yeast	Coenzyme in cellular metabolism (in NAD and NADP)	Pellagra, diarrhea, skin disorders, mental disorders
B6, pyridoxine	Dairy foods, liver, whole grains	Coenzyme in amino acid metabolism	Anemia, skin problems, convulsions, slow growth
Pantothenic acid	Eggs, yeast, liver	Found in acetyl CoA	Adrenal problems, reproductive problems
Biotin	Bacteria in gut, yeast, liver	Found in coenzymes	Skin problems, loss of hair
B12, cobalamin	Dairy foods, liver, meat, eggs	Coenzyme in formation of nucleic acids and proteins, and in red blood cell formation	Pernicious anemia
Folic acid	Vegetables, eggs, whole grains, liver	Coenzyme in formation of heme and nucleotides	Anemia
C, ascorbic acid	Citrus fruits, tomatoes, potatoes	Aids formation of connective tissues; prevents oxidation of cellular constituents	Scurvy, poor bone growth, slow healing
<b>Fat-soluble</b>			
A, retinol	Fruits, vegetables, liver, dairy foods	Found in visual pigments	Damage to mucous membranes, night blindness
D, calciferol	Fortified milk, sunshine, fish oils	Absorption of calcium and phosphorous	Rickets
E, tocopherol	Meat, whole grains, dairy foods	Muscle maintenance, prevents oxidation of cellular components	Anemia
K, menadione	Liver, intestinal bacteria	Blood clotting	Blood-clotting problems (in newborns)