

Four food myths *that just won't die*

Whether at the grocery store, at a restaurant, or in our own kitchens, we are faced with a flood of information about what we should eat. Social media makes it easier than ever to spread myths and half-truths, so how much do we *really* know about the choices we are making when we eat? Our specialists have their say.



Myth 1: The more fiber you eat, the better.

The facts: Your grandparents probably used to tell you about the importance of fiber, but they had no idea just how popular “fiber-rich” foods would become. These days, it seems that food manufacturers are adding specific types of fiber to just about everything – from cereal bars to yogurt and even water! So does this mean you can stop eating broccoli ‘like a health freak’? **On the contrary**, most experts are skeptical that processed fiber offers the same benefits as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, which contain natural fiber. So when it comes to fiber, it’s quality not quantity that matters.



Myth 2: Organic food is better for you.

The facts: ²Organic foods have shot up in popularity over the last decade. It seems that wherever you shop, every other food item you see also comes in an organic, health-conscious version. So, is it worth spending your hard-earned cash on the apples with the “organic” sticker on them? Recent research suggests the answer is no, since there is no significant nutritional difference between organic and conventional foods. And if you buy organic foods because they’re “free from pesticides,” keep in mind that **the opposite is true** – organic farms do use pesticides. And while organic foods may taste a little better, the only difference is that it’s produced using natural, rather than synthetic, pesticides.



Myth 3: Eating at night makes you gain weight.



The facts: My mother was always telling me not to eat anything after 10 p.m. because evening meals would “make me fat.” In certain countries, some people take this idea so seriously that they think twice before eating late in the evening ³even if they’re starving. It may be easy to believe our bodies have an internal clock set to store anything we eat at night as fat, but it’s not as simple as that. **The truth of the matter** is that it’s the extra calories – not when we consume them – that lead to weight gain. So if you tend to eat late in the evening, you don’t have to ⁴eat like a horse – just be selective. Stick with vegetables, lean proteins, and complex carbohydrates if you can.

Myth 4: You should drink eight glasses of water a day.

The facts: ⁵This is another stubborn myth that has been around for decades, and ⁶it just won’t go away. Every summer we are flooded with media reports warning us about the dangers of dehydration and urging us to drink lots of water, even if we’re not thirsty. But these fears are exaggerated. **Contrary to popular belief**, you don’t need to drink eight glasses of water a day, since water is also present in tea, coffee, ice cream, and fruits and vegetables – you name it. In other words, while it’s very important to drink water when the weather is hot, we may be less likely to dehydrate than pseudo-science would have us believe.

On a subject where a lot of people ⁷talk as if they were experts, there is no shortage of bad health advice out there, so please remember, whatever you read, ⁸to take it with a grain of salt.



Read the text and look carefully at "the facts" for each myth. Choose the correct summary of each fact.

- Myth 1** **a** Not all types of fiber are equally beneficial.
 b Certain types of fiber are dangerous.
- Myth 2** **a** Organic food is safer to eat, but not necessarily more nutritious.
 b Organic food isn't necessarily more nutritious or safer to eat.
- Myth 3** **a** What you eat is more important than when you eat.
 b Eating at night can actually help you lose weight.
- Myth 4** **a** Water is not your only source of hydration.
 b Drinking too much water can be dangerous.

Text builder contradicting

We use the expressions in **bold** to contradict something that was said.

*Does this mean you can stop eating broccoli like a health freak? **On the contrary**, most experts are skeptical.*

*If you buy organic food because it's "free from pesticides," keep in mind that **the opposite is true**.*

***The truth of the matter** is that it's the extra calories that lead to weight gain.*

***Contrary to popular belief**, you don't need to drink eight glasses of water a day.*

B Read the Text builder and find the expressions in **bold** in the text. Complete sentences 1–4 with two words.

- 1 Contrary to _____, not everybody needs eight hours of sleep every night.
- 2 Some people say you should work out every day, but _____ is true. It's better to work out every other day so your body can recover.
- 3 We don't only use 10% of our brain. On _____, we use most of it most of the time.
- 4 Spending too much time in the cold air doesn't make you sick. The _____ the matter is that you're more likely to get sick indoors, where germs are easily passed around.