

Weight Loss - Myths and Truths

Myth 1: The number on the scale (on its own) tells us how healthy you are. FALSE

Truth: When researchers studying weight actually controlled for sets of healthy lifestyle factors (such as healthy eating, active living, moderate or absence of drinking and absence of smoking) what they found was that weight really has very little to do with your health and your long term quality and quantity of life (Flegal et al, 2005.) In other words, if you are engaging in a healthy lifestyle that number has very little meaning at all.

Myth 2: Diets work. FALSE

Truth: Trying to reach a certain number on the scale has a 95-98% failure rate. What studies of dieting adolescents show us is teens who diet or engage in restrictive food behaviors end up at a heavier weight than their non-dieting counterparts (Neumark-Sztainer et al, 2011.) The most important part of this study is the participants were a healthy weight to begin with, half of them perceived their weight was heavy and then engaged in some kind of dieting behaviors. This study proves that dieting/food restriction leads to weight gain.

Myth 3: Skipping breakfast or another meal reduces my calories which will help me lose weight. FALSE

Truth: This is the most common error people make.

- Skipping meals can cause us to breakdown lean muscle mass to use as fuel (like burning the frame of your house to heat your home)
- It is a stress on the body. Bodies under stress tend to store for winter.

Myth 4:

For it to count I need to make big changes in my routine. FALSE

Truth: To make lasting change most of us need to think small changes that last a lifetime.

- While it is true most of us can do anything for a short term. In the long term too many rigid rules are hard to keep up with. This rigid thinking often causes backsliding and the feeling of failure.

Myth 5: People who are in larger bodies eat differently from people in smaller bodies. FALSE

Truth: We all come in different shapes and sizes. We cannot make assumptions about an individuals' dietary habits based on looking at them.



The quick take away message is to spend some time and think of 1-2 areas where you would like to make changes. Then set 1-2 small manageable goals linked to the healthy behaviors listed above and commit to them for your lifetime.

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.