

## 6 Metabolism Missteps that may be Derailing Your Weight Loss Efforts

Almost every time we turn on the television or glance at a magazine cover in the supermarket checkout line, we are bombarded with the new weight-loss rules and diet plans. Suggestions to drink a special shake, cut out carbs, or choke down tasteless food combinations, but we as a nation aren't losing weight—we're getting heavier. What are you to believe when fad diets and false claims are flying at you from every direction? It's no wonder we're so confused about what to eat and how to manage our weight.

We've all been exposed to various "diet rules" over the years that can lead to big "metabolism missteps" and, accurate or not, many of us still live by them. It's time to debunk some of these outdated and unhelpful rules once and for all and give you some NEW guidelines that will actually help you reach your goals!

### **Misstep #1: If it is "natural" I can eat as much of it as I want.**

Nothing says summertime quite like "fresh" (and natural) ingredients that are growing right in your backyard garden. And although these fabulous ingredients can make a perfect summertime meal, it is still important to remember that a fresh fruit dessert (such as strawberry shortcake or cherry pie) or summertime pasta salad can contain a large amount of calories depending on what ingredients you use to create your summertime masterpiece!

### **Metabolism Fix: Don't mindlessly eat/snack on ANY food.**

What does cause weight gain for most people is eating a large amount of food (whether health promoting or not) that exceeds the amount needed to fuel their body. Your total caloric intake for the day is what matters—even when your calories are coming from "natural" food sources. You *can* eat a wide variety of summertime favorites without gaining weight, as long as you are eating mindfully to satisfy real hunger rather than stress or boredom and don't go over your calorie needs for the day when doing so.

### **Misstep #2: Always choose fat-free foods.**

These days, nearly every full-fat food, from cookies to ice cream, has a fat-free counterpart. It's the first instinct of many people to simply eat these reduced fat foods to control their weight; however, this tactic could actually derail your good intentions. **Why?** Because most of the fat-free foods you can buy are things you shouldn't be eating anyway: empty-calorie junk food and heavily processed sweets, crackers and cookies. These items have been available for over a decade, but people aren't getting any thinner by eating them. Remember, dietary fat isn't the sole culprit that has made us

overweight, **excess calories are**. While many of us could stand to cut back on our “animal fat” intake and replace it with more plant based fat sources such as nuts, avocados, and olive oil, but calories count when it comes to weight loss. All the reduced-fat foods in the world will not help you lose weight if you're making poor food choices or eating too many calories in general.

**Metabolism Fix: Include a moderate amount of health promoting fats in your weight loss plan.**

Your body needs dietary fat for day-to-day organ protection, vitamin absorption, hormone production and more, so you won't be doing yourself any favors by completely depriving yourself of this macronutrient. A sensible amount of fat can also aid in satiety, which makes you feel full longer. Try adding healthful fats such as nuts, avocado, or olive oil to your diet. Choose low-fat or fat-free products when it comes to **dairy and meats** to limit your intake of unhealthy fats and control calories, but leave the other fat-free foods on the supermarket shelf.

**Misstep #3: You should burn every calorie you eat through exercise.**

To lose weight, it's true that you need to burn more calories than you consume. But some people misinterpret this weight-loss equation, thinking they must burn off every calorie they eat—and then some—by *exercising*. Besides being inaccurate, this practice can be unsafe and lead to exhaustion, overuse injuries, and stalled weight-loss among other problems. Remember, your body is constantly burning calories throughout the day, even when you're not physically active. This is known as a basal metabolic rate (BMR), and it accounts for more than 1,200-1,500 calories per day (on average). Add to that all the calories you burn by moving, walking, standing, and yes, exercising, and you can see how easy it is to “burn more calories than you consume” without spending your life in the gym.

**Metabolism Fix: Move more and exercise moderately.**

Try to achieve an OVERALL active lifestyle by adding more physical activity to your days. Not all of this activity needs to be planned exercise (although you should exercise 3-6 times per week for 45-60 minutes per session to help burn additional calories and enhance your health). Small things that get you moving more—taking the stairs, walking to a co-worker's desk instead of emailing, taking a walk—add to your daily calorie burn and help you lose weight. Combining healthy eating and daily exercise is the best way to help manage your weight and promote overall health.

**Misstep #4: Skip meals to lose weight faster.**

Many people believe that skipping meals like breakfast will help them eat fewer calories and therefore speed up weight loss. In theory, this idea seems to make sense, but skipping meals to save calories backfires more often than not. When you go several hours without food, you will be ravenous by the time your next meal comes along and this will make you more likely to throw

your eating plans out the window and consume anything within reach. In addition to this, eating too infrequently may slow down your metabolism, sending your body into conservation (or "starvation") mode because it thinks calories are scarce.

**Metabolism Fix: Eat sensible portions at regular intervals throughout the day.**

Try to keep your body's metabolism running as efficiently as possible by fueling it at regular intervals. Try eating smaller, more balanced meals every 2 to 3 hours to properly nourish yourself and encourage weight loss. Eating smaller meals that contain a mixture of carbohydrates, lean proteins and healthy fat will keep your metabolic fire stoked all day long!

**Misstep #5: Eating low-carb is the way to win at weight loss.**

Over the past several years, low-carb diet fads have given carbohydrates a bad rap, but the most important thing to remember is that all carbohydrates are not created equal! Carbohydrates are an important fuel source for your body and they are necessary for safe, steady weight loss, too. Your body needs carbohydrates to efficiently burn fat, so skimping on the carbs could actually hurt your weight loss efforts and be detrimental to your health.

**Metabolism Fix: Cut back on processed carbohydrates and choose whole foods instead.**

It is true that some carbs (whole grains, vegetables, legumes, etc) are better for you than others (white bread, sugary cereals, and sweets) are. Rather than omitting carbs from your diet plan, be more selective. Choose more whole grains and unprocessed foods like brown rice, quinoa, whole grain bread, and oats and limit your intake of unhealthy carbs that sneak into your diet via processed foods, sweets, caloric beverages and refined flours.

**Misstep #6: Give up eating all of your favorite fattening foods.**

This is a common practice can backfire even on those with very high levels of willpower and motivation. It's simply unrealistic to think that you can cut out all the foods that you love without ever rebelling. Chances are, if you keep yourself from eating your favorite "bad" foods all the time, you'll eventually end up giving in and bingeing on those foods since you haven't had them in so long. By categorizing foods into "good" and "bad" groups, you're only setting yourself up to want what you can't have. Good-for-you foods feel like punishment and "bad-for-you" foods are more alluring.

**Metabolism Fix: Eat all foods in moderation.**

Instead, of giving up certain foods and forcing yourself to eat others, don't make *any* food off-limits. With moderation and portion control, you can still eat your favorites without straying from your goals. Try sprinkling a few chocolate chips on your oatmeal in the morning instead of eating an entire chocolate bar, or have one tablespoon of peanut butter with some celery instead of slathering layers of it on a sandwich. By allowing yourself these little treats, you'll still be able to eat what you love, gradually decrease the

intensity of your cravings, and avoid binges that could derail your weight loss efforts.

When it comes down to it, the new rules for avoiding metabolism meltdowns are common sense—and easier to stick with. The bottom line is to ultimately listen to your body's signals and honor your cravings in a sensible way while incorporating regular exercise, portion control and healthy eating habits into your lifestyle for the long term. Incorporate these new "rules" into your repertoire and you'll be amazed at what a difference such small changes can make!

## The Truth About Carbohydrates

### *(Not all Carbs are Created Equal)*

It's true. A carbohydrate-rich diet can inflate appetite and girth. And while low-carb diets do promote short-term weight loss, the truth is, you can have your carbs and eat them too—you just have to know how to choose them.

### The Truth about Carbohydrates

- Carbohydrates are the body's ideal fuel for most functions. They supply the body with the energy needed for the muscles, brain and central nervous system. In fact, the human brain depends exclusively on carbohydrates for its energy.
- Carbohydrates are found in fruits, vegetables, beans, dairy products, foods made from grain products, and sweeteners such as sugar, honey, molasses, and corn syrup.
- The body converts digestible (non-fiber) carbohydrates into glucose, which our cells use as fuel. Some carbs (simple) break down quickly into glucose while others (complex) are slowly broken down and enter the bloodstream more gradually.
- During digestion, all carbohydrates are broken down into glucose before they can enter the bloodstream where insulin helps the glucose enter the body's cells. Some glucose is stored as glycogen in the liver and muscles for future use, like fueling a workout. If there is extra glucose, the body will store it as fat.

### All carbohydrates are not created equal.

There are basically three types of carbohydrates:

1. **Simple** carbohydrates are composed of 1 or 2 sugar units that are broken down and digested quickly.

Recent research has shown that certain simple carbohydrate foods can cause extreme surges in blood sugar levels, which also increases insulin release. This can elevate appetite and the risk of excess fat storage.

2. **Complex** carbohydrates (also referred to as **starch**) are made up of many sugar units and are found in both natural (brown rice) and refined (white bread) form. They are structurally more complex and take longer to be broken down and digested.

Complex carbohydrate foods have been shown to enter the blood stream gradually and trigger only a moderate rise in insulin levels, which stabilizes appetite and results in fewer carbohydrates that are stored as fat. Unrefined or 'whole grain' carbohydrates found in products like brown rice, whole wheat pasta and bran cereals are

digested slowly. They contain vitamins, minerals and fiber which promote health. Fiber and nutrient-rich vegetables, fruits and beans which are carbohydrates also have many important functions for the body and are important for good health.

3. **Indigestible** carbohydrates are also called **fiber**. The body is unable to breakdown fiber into small enough units for absorption. It is therefore not an energy source for the body but does promote health in many other ways.

Simple carbohydrates, complex carbohydrates, and fiber are found in many foods. Some provide important nutrients that promote health while others simply provide calories that promote girth.

- **Sugar**, syrup, candy, honey, jams, jelly, molasses, and soft drinks contain simple carbohydrates and little if any nutrients.
- **Fruits** contain primarily simple carbohydrate but also valuable vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water.
- **Vegetables** contain varying amounts of simple and complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, fiber, and water.
- **Legumes** such as beans, peas, lentils and soybeans contain complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and protein.
- **Milk products** contain simple carbohydrates along with protein, calcium and other nutrients.
- **Grain products** contain complex carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, minerals, and protein. The amounts vary depending on the type of grain used and the amount of processing. Selecting whole grain options whenever possible is recommended.

## **Fiesta Pasta Salad (Original Recipe)**

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 pound fusilli or rotini, cooked according to package directions, drained and rinsed
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 3 cloves garlic, mashed and finely minced
- 3/4 cup mayonnaise, or more, to taste
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 pint grape tomatoes, halved or quartered lengthwise
- 3 to 4 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil leaves

### **Preparation:**

Put drained warm pasta in a large bowl and toss with the lemon zest and juice. In a cup or small bowl, combine the garlic with the mayonnaise and sour cream. Stir into the pasta. Add chopped red onion, tomatoes, chopped parsley, and basil. Toss to combine thoroughly. If desired, add more mayonnaise. Taste and add salt and pepper, as needed.  
Serves 4 to 6.

### **Nutrition Information per 1 cup serving**

**Calories: 470**

**Fat: 33 grams**

## **Joanie's Summertime Pasta Salad (recipe remake)**

1 pound whole grain pasta, cooked al dente and cooled to room temp  
Zest and juice of 4 lemons  
3 garlic cloves, mashed and finely minced  
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil  
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion or scallions  
1 pint cherry/grape tomatoes (or whatever looks good in the garden)  
4 – 6 cups fresh diced veggies from the garden or farmer's market  
1/2 cup chopped parsley  
1/2 cup chopped basil leaves  
Sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

### **Preparation:**

Put drained pasta in a large bowl and toss with the lemon zest and juice and olive oil. Stir in all of the diced veggies, chopped parsley, and basil. Toss to combine thoroughly. Season with sea salt and pepper to taste.  
Serves 4 to 6.

### **Nutrition Information per 1 cup serving**

**Calories: 250**

**Fat: 6 grams**



## Honeydew and Cucumber Salad w/Sesame

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons rice-wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh gingerroot
- 2 teaspoons tamari or soy sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon Asian (toasted) sesame oil, or to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes, or to taste
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 seedless cucumber, halved lengthwise and slice thin (about 2 cups)
- 2 cups 1-inch cubes of honeydew melon
- 2 scallions, minced
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted lightly and cooled

### Preparation:

In a bowl whisk together the vinegar, the gingerroot, the tamari or soy sauce, the sugar, the sesame oil, the red pepper flakes, and the vegetable oil until the dressing is combined well. Add the cucumber, the melon, and the scallions, toss the salad until it is combined well, and sprinkle it with the sesame seeds.



# Summertime Tomato, Mozzarella & Basil Salad

## Ingredients:

- 1 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/4 teaspoon English dry mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon sugar
- 1 large vine-ripened tomato, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 pound mozzarella cheese (preferably fresh), cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 6 to 8 large fresh basil leaves, sliced thin

## Preparation:

In a small bowl whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, mustard, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. On a platter arrange tomato slices alternately with mozzarella and top with basil. Drizzle salad with vinaigrette.

Serves 2

Note: Recipe improvised for a larger group (Nutrition Night☺)