

Parkside Dietetic Service

Diet Myths

Skipping breakfast is a good way to lose weight

Apart from making you feel tired and lacking in energy, skipping meals - especially breakfast, will make you feel hungrier and make you a lot more likely to reach for high-fat, high-calorie snacks. Studies actually show that people who eat breakfast, are more likely to maintain a healthier weight than those who don't eat breakfast.

Diet Tips

For a healthier option at breakfast time, choose **wholegrain cereals** that are lower in sugar, fat and salt, and contain fibre and B vitamins, among other nutrients. Examples can include **whole wheat cereal biscuits, shredded wholegrain pillows and porridge oats**. Look at the nutrition labels to help you compare brands and opt for the healthier version of a product.

Muesli, which usually contains wholegrains and fruit, is often seen as a healthier option, but many brands can be high in fat, added sugar and in some cases, even added salt - so it is worth checking the labels.

Nutritional information is stated in both per 100g and per serving of a product, which can be useful when comparing one cereal brand with another. Traffic light labelling can also help you to identify healthier choices - the more 'greens' on the label, the healthier the product you are choosing.

Crash diets are the answer to weight loss

Fad diets that drastically cut calories may work in the short term but will not work in the long term. Apart from the fact that they have the tendency to quickly become boring, eating too little calories over long periods of time can **cause your metabolism to slow down**, making weight regain very likely. Making small changes to your diet and lifestyle that you can stick to, is the key to long-term success.

Stop those treats if you want to lose weight

Depriving yourself of all your favourite foods is unlikely to lead to weight loss in the long term, as you'll eventually give into temptation and abandon your efforts. There's no harm in allowing yourself an occasional treat now and again, as part of an overall balanced diet and lifestyle. Aiming to snack more regularly on healthy choices between your meals can help control your appetite and weight.

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Some examples of low calorie snacks include vegetable crudité's with low fat dips, a portion of fruit with low fat or natural yoghurt, rice cakes or plain crackers with reduced fat cheese or hummus and low sugar wholegrain cereal with skimmed or semi skimmed milk.

Specific foods will help you burn fat

Sadly there is no evidence that specific foods or drinks can actually help us to burn body fat. There is however, a lot of evidence to show that sustainable weight loss can result from sensibly reducing our overall calorie intake and increasing our activity level.

Carbs are fattening

Carbohydrate foods have gained a lot of bad press in the past few years. However, there's actually no proof that healthy, carbohydrate rich foods are more likely to make us gain weight than any other food. It's an excess of calories that makes us pile on the pounds – and it really doesn't matter where those extra calories come from.

Gram for gram, carbohydrate actually has less than half the calories of fat. In fact, more often than not, it's the extra fat or toppings we add to carbs that boosts their calorie content, such as creamy sauces on pasta, lots of butter on toast, adding full fat cheese to baked potatoes or frying potatoes to make chips.

When choosing carbs, it's best to go for high-fibre or wholegrain versions, such as brown rice, wholemeal bread, jacket potatoes and whole wheat pasta, all of which contain more fibre than the 'white' varieties and will help keep you feeling fuller for longer. Try reducing the amount of fat used in cooking, try serving pasta with more tomato-based rather than creamy sauces, and try topping jacket potatoes with reduced fat or cottage cheese.

Contact:

Our dietitians have the professional knowledge and skills to help translate evidence based clinical research into practical guidance, to enable you to make positive diet and lifestyle choices to help improve your health and wellbeing and support the treatment of a range of medical conditions. To book an appointment with Michelle, please call **020 8971 8026** or **020 8971 8206**.