

## Myths about Fruits and Vegetables

Many myths and misconceptions about fruit and vegetables have surfaced over the ages. There is often some truth behind these bits of wisdom. The following information will help you understand the facts about fruits and vegetables.

### Myths about Fruits and Vegetables

**Myth:** An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

**Reality:** It depends on the reason you need to see the doctor. Apples contain a lot of fiber, which helps prevent constipation. The pectin in an apple is soluble fiber, which is easily absorbed by the body to help reduce cholesterol. The fiber also helps people feel full, which may help prevent obesity.

**Myth:** Potato chips count as a vegetable.

**Reality:** Potatoes are in the vegetable group of the food pyramid, but potato chips are not. Potato chips are cooked in oils and thus, are extremely high in fat. They cannot count as a vegetable.

**Myth:** Carrots help you see in the dark.

**Reality:** There is some truth in this. Carrots, squash, spinach and broccoli all contain large amounts of vitamin A, which is a vitamin that has been shown to improve night vision.

**Myth:** Broccoli cures ulcers.

**Reality:** There is no proof that broccoli cures stomach ulcers. However, recent studies have shown that sulforaphane, a compound found in broccoli, may help stop the growth of and even destroy ovarian cancer cells.

**Myth:** Canned or frozen fruits and vegetables are less nutritious than fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Reality:** Fresh fruits and vegetables are not always the most nutritious choice. Frozen and canned vegetables can be just as nutritious, if not more so, than fresh because they are usually picked and frozen or canned at their peak. For example, frozen strawberries can contain more vitamins and minerals than fresh ones that are out of season. To ensure that you get the most nutritious fruits and vegetables, buy fresh in season. When buying frozen or canned, choose no sugar added and low sodium options.

**Myth:** Drinking juice is just as good as eating fruit.

**Reality:** This is not true. Juice lacks fiber (even when the juice is freshly made). Fiber aids the digestion process, and juices do not have the same effect. Additionally, many store-bought fruit juices contain sugar, and vegetable juices often have high amounts of added sodium.

**Myth:** Avocados are too fatty to be healthy.

**Reality:** For a healthy diet, it is important to reduce the amount of saturated fat you consume. Avocados, however, contain monounsaturated fat. This type of fat has a positive effect on blood cholesterol levels. Of course, eating too much of anything (even good stuff) can make you gain weight. The same is true of avocados.

**Myth:** Salads consisting entirely of greens are the healthiest.

**Reality:** Adding other ingredients to your salad is healthier than having greens alone. Tomatoes contain lycopene, a nutrient linked to a lower risk of heart disease and cancer. Purple vegetables, like eggplant, contain powerful antioxidants that help reduce heart-disease risk and improve brain function. Radishes contain indoles, which have been shown to prevent the metastases of breast cancer cells. Overall, adding flavorful veggies and proteins is a healthy way to liven up a salad.

**Myth:** You burn all the calories in celery just by eating it.

**Reality:** Celery has six calories per stalk. Unfortunately, the body does not expend more calories than that to chew and digest it. This does not mean it is not a healthy food choice; celery is a great source of fiber that can help fill you up.

**Myth:** Grapefruit makes you burn fat.

**Reality:** No food can make you burn fat, including grapefruit. It is low in calories and high in nutrients, however, making it a healthy choice.

**Myth:** Bruised fruit is less healthy.

**Reality:** This myth has some weight to it. Bruising can cause chemical reactions and a loss of some nutrients in fruit. In fact, breaking up the cells of any fruit can account for a loss of some vitamins. This included slicing, chopping and mashing. Also, it is always better to get the freshest fruit because the longer the fruit stands, the greater the loss of nutrients.

**Myth:** Eating oranges will make wrinkles go away.

**Reality:** Vitamin C is an antioxidant that helps the synthesis of collagen, a protein that helps keep skin elastic. This may not make wrinkles go away, but it will help with the appearance of your skin. However, it is not just oranges that have vitamin C. Brussel sprouts, red cabbage, snow peas, broccoli and tomatoes are also great sources of the vitamin.

**Myth:** Asparagus is a diuretic.

**Reality:** False. As your body metabolizes asparagus, it produces a chemical called methanethiol. This strong-smelling chemical is composed mostly of sulfur which can be smelled when you urinate. Asparagus does not cause you to urinate more often.

**Myth:** It is dangerous to drink grapefruit juice with medication.

**Reality:** This is very true. Grapefruit juice may interfere with the metabolism of certain medications and cause dangerous side effects. Be sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist, or avoid drinking grapefruit juice while taking medication.

**Myth:** Becoming a vegetarian will make you lose weight.

**Reality:** Research shows that vegetarians do eat fewer calories and less fat than non-vegetarians. A diet plan with a low-fat content may be helpful for weight loss. However, you can be a vegetarian and still consume high-fat, high-calorie or high-sugar foods (French fries, cheese, candy) that could cause weight gain.

## Resources

- MyPlate: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)
- Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC): [www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health: [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: [guidanceresources.com](http://guidanceresources.com)

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