



## Flesh out the truth from weight-loss advice

As the weather warms up and people shed a few layers of clothes, weight-loss season opens again. There is no shortage of weight-loss tips on the Internet. Some may help, and some can backfire on your efforts to successfully lose body fat.

Can you tell the difference between weight-loss fact and fiction? Take the quiz:

» Any weight loss is good for you.

**Fiction:** Losing lean body components like muscle mass is not good and actually decreases the number of calories you need. This contributes to rapid regain of the lost weight.

» Cut back your calories as much as possible for fast fat loss.

**Fiction:** Cutting calories too drastically triggers the loss of lean muscle tissues along with fat. It shows up as quick weight loss on the scale, but it is not what you want to lose. Fat loss, unfortunately, is a slow and gradual process.

» You need more protein when you are dieting.

**Fact:** When calorie intake is low, the body uses protein components for energy supply more than usual. Research on weight loss indicates that to support optimal fat loss, it helps to consume about twice the

normally recommended protein. This is about 1.5 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight (or 0.7 grams per pound).

» Beans are a great source of protein and should be substituted for meat in the diet.

**Fiction:** Beans are a good food, but when it comes to weight loss, they do not serve as a good substitute for meat. Meat is primarily protein. Beans are primarily protein plus carbohydrate. Consequently, to get protein from beans requires consuming about three times as many calories as lean meat, chicken or fish.

» Certain foods like grapefruit, celery, or cabbage soup can burn fat and make you lose weight.

**Fiction:** These foods are relatively low in calories, but there is no weight loss "magic" in them. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can be rather high in calories from sugar.

» Opt for peanut butter or almond butter spreads instead of cream cheese or butter.

**Fiction:** This recommendation can backfire because these foods are all high in concentrated fat calories, and there is a tendency to use more nut butters on bread than butter or cream cheese. Moderation is the key for all of these foods, espe-

cially for weight loss.

» Use the stairs whenever possible. Use the bathroom on a different floor at work.

**Fact:** Walking 10,000 steps a day has been effective in promoting fat loss. Walking (especially up stairs) uses calories and can help to prevent muscle loss in the legs. A pedometer or pedometer app on a smartphone can help you keep track.

» Just eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains to lose weight.

**Fiction:** Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are good for you, but it is extremely difficult to meet all nutrient needs with only these foods, especially the increased protein needs during weight loss.

» Just eat protein and avoid all carbohydrates.

**Fiction:** Staying physically active during weight loss is easier for most people if they have some carbohydrate in their diet. Higher-intensity exercise that burns more calories per minute relies on glucose as the major energy source. In addition, dips in blood sugar for some people on a low-carb diet can impair brain function, making it difficult to maintain the resolve it takes to stay with a weight-loss program.

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