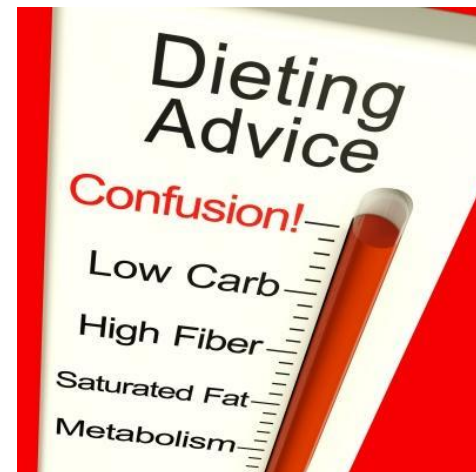


# Myth-busting Nutrition

## Separating Fact from Fiction

Presented by Amy Angus, Dietitian  
First Nations and Inuit Health Branch  
March 11, 2020



# Overview

- Discuss the evidence behind some common nutrition myths:
  1. **Weight Loss**
  2. **Health Halos**
  3. **“Good” or “Bad” Foods**
  4. **How to Separate Fact From Fiction**
  5. **Questions**

**MYTHS**  
**BUSTED!**

# Weight Loss Myths

**MYTH 1: Weight loss diets give long term results**

**MYTH 2: Low fat products are always a healthy choice**

**MYTH 3: Detoxifying or cleansing our bodies is needed**

# Weight Loss Myths

**MYTH 1: Weight loss diets give long term results**

# Weight Loss Diets



- Alkaline Diet
- Atkins Diet
- Baby Food Diet
- Eat Right for Your Blood Type
- Cabbage Soup Diet
- Apple Cider Vinegar Diet
- Gluten Free Diet
- Intermittent Fasting
- South Beach Diet
- The Grapefruit Diet
- Keto Diet/Ideal Protein Diet
- High carb/low fat diets
- Diet pills and supplements
- Herbal remedies
- + many more!

**Weight Loss Industry in Canada = ~\$7 Billion Dollars**

# Weight Loss Diets



- Differ in degree of foods or calories restricted
  - Low Calorie - Cabbage Soup Diet, Baby Food Diet
  - Emphasis on a single food - Grapefruit Diet, Apple Cider Vinegar Diet
  - Low Carb, High Protein - Atkins Diet, South Beach Diet, Keto Diet
    - Example: Keto Diet
      - Very Low Carbohydrate - cut out dairy, grains, legumes, fruit, and some vegetables
      - High Fat and Moderate Protein

# Weight Loss Diets – Keto Diet



July 15, 2019

## The Ketogenic Diet for Obesity and Diabetes— Enthusiasm Outpaces Evidence

Shivam Joshi, MD<sup>1,2</sup>; Robert J. Ostfeld, MD, MSc<sup>3</sup>; Michelle McMacken, MD<sup>1,2</sup>

» [Author Affiliations](#) | [Article Information](#)

*JAMA Intern Med.* 2019;179(9):1163-1164. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.2633

- No evidence to show Keto diet works in long term
  - Hard to stay Keto since it is so restrictive
- Unknown if it is safe when followed for life
- Nutrients of concern = fibre, protein, B vitamins, folic acid, calcium, fat-soluble vitamins

# Weight Loss Diets – What We Know



- Weight loss diets can work in the short term
- Many diets are hard to maintain in the long term = weight regain
- ‘Yo-yo’ dieting more harmful for health than staying at a constant weight





# Weight Loss Myths

**MYTH 2: Low fat products are always a healthy choice**



# Fat-Free Foods



- Fat adds taste and texture to a food
- Fat replaced with sugar in many 'light', low-fat or fat-free foods

Example:

- Peanut Butter

**Ingredients:** Dry roasted peanuts



- Light Peanut Butter

**Ingredients:** Dry roasted peanuts, corn syrup solids, icing sugar, hydrogenated vegetable oil (cottonseed, rapeseed, soybean oil), salt, fancy molasses



## Fat-Free Foods

- Many 'light', low-fat or fat-free foods are loaded with sugar
  - Sugar gives taste and texture
  - Can be high in calories

### Example:

In 1 tbsp.,

Peanut Butter = 90 calories, 7 g of fat and 1 g of sugar

Light Peanut Butter = 80 calories, 5 g of fat and 2 g of sugar

# Weight Loss Myths

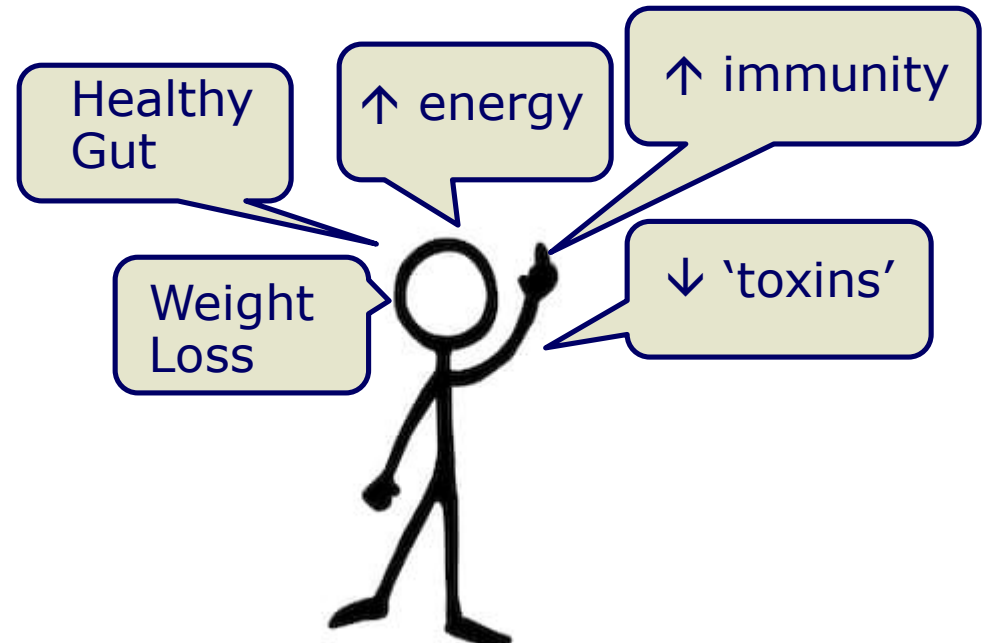


**MYTH 3: Detoxifying or cleansing our bodies is needed**

# Cleansing and Detoxing

- Cleansing/detoxing done using:
  - Fasting
  - Strict diet of water, juice, teas or smoothies
  - Herbs or laxatives

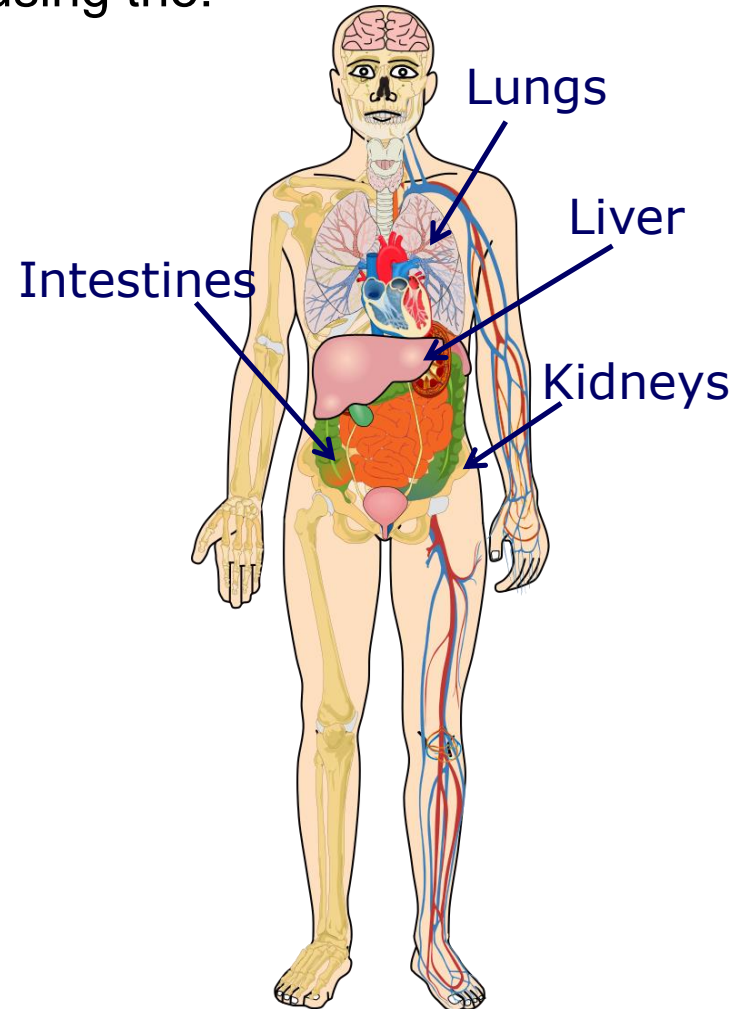
What cleanses promise:



# Cleansing and Detoxing

- **No** scientific evidence to show that cleansing can:
  - ↑ bowel health
  - ↓ colon cancer risk
  - lasting weight loss

Your body already protects itself using the:



# Cleansing and Detoxing

- **No** scientific evidence to show that cleansing
  - Removes toxins from your body
  - Has lasting weight loss
- Severe calorie restriction = may have short-term weight loss, but also extreme hunger and fatigue
- Save your \$ on expensive supplements/laxatives that promote cleansing/detox

# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Balanced Diet
  - Variety and Nutrients
- Eat whole foods, including:
  - Whole grains
  - Vegetables and fruit
  - Protein Foods (including Dairy)
  - Water



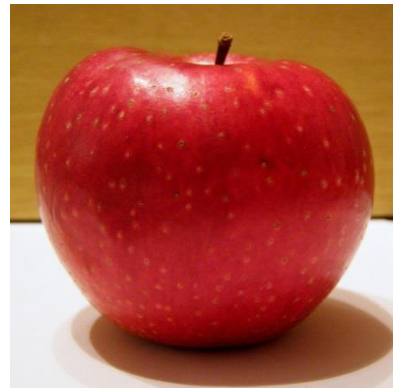


# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Instead of low-carb, choose more whole grains and vegetables and fruit
  - Fibre can help you feel less hungry which helps with appetite and weight control
  - Fibre can trap toxins and remove them from the body



VS



# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Not all fats are created equal. Instead of low-fat, make sure you are getting good fats.

**Harmful fats**

**Healthy fats**

Trans fats

Saturated fats

Unsaturated fats



# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Look at the Nutrition Facts Table

Serving Size grams (31 g)

Amount Per Serving	% DV
<b>Calories</b> 140 cal	
<b>Total Fat</b> 5.0 g	8 %
Saturated Fat 2.5 g	
Trans. Fat 0.0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0.0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 45 mg	2 %
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22 g	7 %
Dietary Fiber 1 g	4 %
Sugars 12 g	
<b>Protein</b> 2 g	
<b>Potassium</b> 0 mg	0 %

1 Look at the amount of food

2 Read the % daily values

- 5% is a little
- 15% is a lot

3 Look at the amount of sugar in low fat items compared to the regular

*Note: Sugar does not have a % daily value. Use the info on the left to turn g into tsp.*

Sugar

One teaspoon (tsp) of sugar = 4g.  
Take the amount of sugar on a label and divide by four to get tsp.

# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Instead of dieting, stay healthy by focusing on:





# Weight Loss – The Facts

## Food or Exercise – does one matter more?

Activity	Calories Burned (160lb person)
1 hour walking	314
1 hour elliptical (moderate effort)	365



**190 kcal =  
40 min walk**



**2225 kcal =  
6 hour elliptical  
workout**

# Weight Loss – The Facts

- Balanced diet
- Focus on small changes that you can maintain long term
  - Cut out a teaspoon of sugar from your coffee
  - Add more vegetables at dinner to fill you up
  - Go for a 15 minute walk after dinner
- Your “best weight” is the weight you can achieve while living the lifestyle you enjoy!

# Health Halos



**MYTH 1: Buying organic foods is the best choice**



**MYTH 2: 'Natural' on a food label = healthy**



**MYTH 3: 'I can improve my health by drinking vitamin drinks**



# Health Halos



## MYTH 1: Buying organic foods is the best choice





# Organic Foods

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency has standards for a product to be labeled as “organic”
  - Strict limits for pesticides, soil quality, the way something is grown
  - Labelled as “organic” or a % of ingredients as organic
- What are some organic foods?

# Organic Foods

- Choosing 'organic' items does not = health
  - Organic potato chips, ice cream, candy and cookies are no healthier than their non-organic versions
- There is currently **no evidence** to show that organic dairy, eggs and vegetables/fruit are healthier than non-organic
  - Also, can be 50 - 200% more expensive!



All vegetables and fruit are healthy choices - organic or not!

# Health Halos



**MYTH 2: 'Natural' on a food label = healthy**



# **“All Natural” Foods**

- The label “all natural” is found on many foods
  - Gives illusion of health and quality ingredients sourced from Mother Nature
- There are no regulations on the term - meaning anyone can use it
- Natural does not = healthy,
  - For example: “all-natural” hot dog is preserved with nitrites from celery extract, rather than synthetic nitrites
- Do you see ‘all natural’ or any health claim on an apple, tomato or banana?

# Health Halos



**MYTH 3: 'I can improve my health by drinking vitamin drinks**

# Vitamin-Enhanced Beverages

- Fortified beverage = vitamins and minerals added by manufacturer
- Marketed to consumers as being “healthier”,
  - Added vitamins and minerals
  - Otherwise, low nutritional value 8 tsp of added sugar in 1 bottle!



- Fortification can have benefits when it can prevent illness, if hard to obtain in the diet or at risk of deficiency



Vit D



Folate

# Health Halos – The Facts

- The best choice you can make is to eat more vegetables and fruit!

- Unprocessed food, no food label!
- Source of fibre, vitamins and minerals



- Non-organic fresh, frozen and canned are great options
  - Frozen vegetables/fruit are picked at peak ripeness so may have more nutrients than fresh!
- If concerned about pesticides, wash your vegetables and fruit



# Health Halos – The Facts

- Be aware that food marketing can influence your choices
- Many foods and drinks that are marketed are high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat
- Recognize when foods are being marketed to you
- Use food labels rather than marketing to make decisions





# Health Halos - The Facts

- Instead of focusing on foods labelled as ‘**natural**’, read the ingredient list to choose foods that are close to the way nature made them

**INGREDIENTS:** WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, VEGETABLE OIL (SOYBEAN OR CANOLA OIL), SEA SALT.

**CONTAINS: WHEAT.**



**INGREDIENTS:** WATER, SUGAR, CORN SYRUP, MILK PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, VEGETABLE OIL (CANOLA, HIGH OLEIC SUNFLOWER, CORN), COCOA PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, SOY PROTEIN ISOLATE, AND LESS THAN 0.5% OF POTASSIUM CITRATE, MAGNESIUM PHOSPHATE, POTASSIUM CHLORIDE, CELLULOSE GEL AND GUM, SALT, CALCIUM PHOSPHATE, CALCIUM CARBONATE, SODIUM ASCORBATE, SOY LECITHIN, CHOLINE BITARTRATE, ALPHA TOCOPHERYL ACETATE, ASCORBIC ACID, CARRAGEENAN, FERRIC PYROPHOSPHATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, ZINC SULFATE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, NIACINAMIDE, VITAMIN D<sub>3</sub>, CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, MANGANESE SULFATE, COPPER SULFATE, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE, THIAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE, BETA CAROTENE, RIBOFLAVIN, CHROMIUM CHLORIDE, FOLIC ACID, BIOTIN, POTASSIUM IODIDE, VITAMIN K<sub>1</sub>, SODIUM SELENITE, SODIUM MOLYBDATE, VITAMIN B<sub>12</sub>.



# **“Good” or “Bad” Foods?**



**MYTH 1: Dairy = antibiotics, hormones and disease, oh my!**



**MYTH 2: Switch to non-white sugars for health**



**MYTH 3: Eating ‘superfoods’ can keep diseases away**

# **“Good” or “Bad” Foods?**



**MYTH 1: Dairy = antibiotics, hormones and disease, oh my!**

## Dairy – How it is made

- **Hormones** - growth hormones are allowed in the US for milk production, but growth hormones are illegal in Canada
- **Antibiotics** – given to sick cows, but milk is disposed until she is healthy again and medication is out of her system. There are no antibiotics in Canadian milk
- **Pasteurization** - heat treatment to destroy potentially harmful bacteria in milk, but nutrients in milk not affected by heat

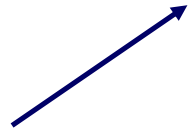
# Dairy - Relationship with Health

- Dairy products are the main source of calcium and vitamin D in our diets

- Calcium amounts:



1 cup milk



2¼ cups  
of broccoli



8 cups  
of  
spinach



- In Canada, we cannot make Vitamin D from the sun from October to March; therefore, milk is fortified with vitamin D
- Milk is a nutritious choice for calcium, vitamin D and protein

# “Good” or “Bad” Foods?

## MYTH 2: Switch to non-white sugars for health





# **Sugar – Honey, Brown Sugar, Cane Sugar**

- All are types of sugar
- Your body handles naturally occurring sugar in food, and processed sugars and syrups in the same way
- Honey = ‘more natural’, but still sugar and provides calories with very few other nutrients
- Excess sugar in any form gives extra calories and raises your blood sugar
- Whether you choose honey, brown sugar, agave syrup or white sugar, the advice is to use small amounts

# Sugar Substitutes - Artificial Sweeteners

- Artificial sweeteners provide a sweet taste with little or no calories
- Examples: stevia, aspartame, sucralose, xylitol
- Can be found in soft drinks, desserts, and candy
- Sugar substitutes can ↓ the amount of sugar eaten; but can also make healthy eating difficult
  - Example: Diet soft drinks
    - May replace healthy drinks like water and milk
    - Still prefer sweet foods





# **“Good” or “Bad” Foods?**



**MYTH 3: Eating ‘superfoods’ can keep diseases away**

# Superfoods

- There is no official definition of 'superfood'
- Often used to market trendy foods like goji berries, açai berries, kale and pomegranates
  - Can also be very expensive
- Many basic foods like apples and beans can be equally nutritious, less costly and more widely available



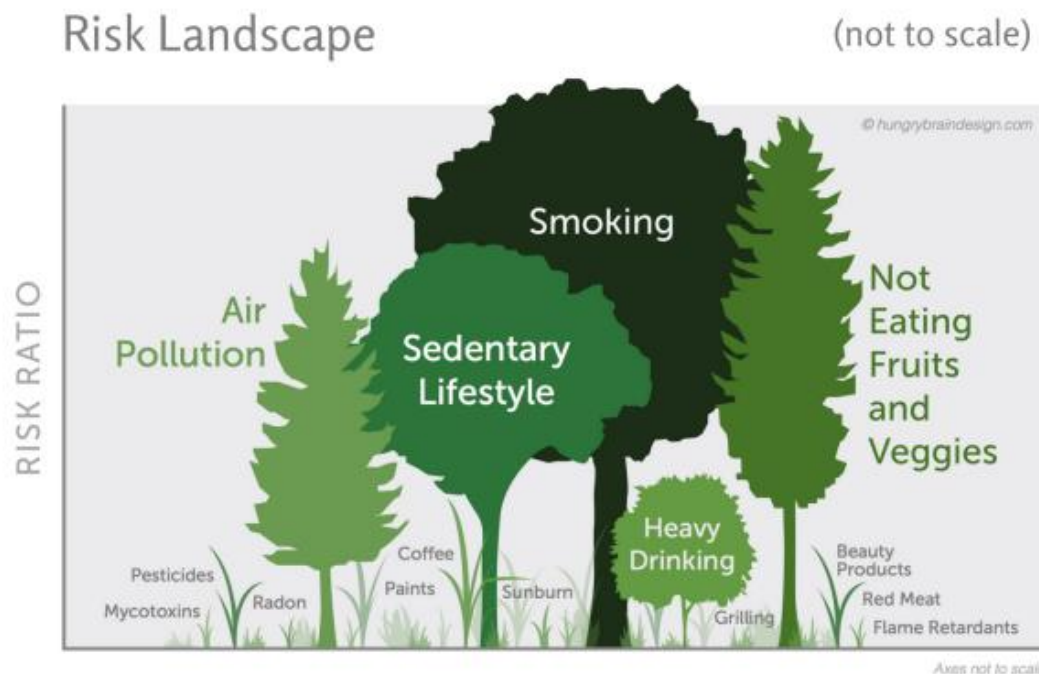
# Superfoods

- No single food has superpowers to keep you healthy
- We need a balance of all foods (not just the trendiest)
  - Vegetables and fruit, whole grain foods, protein foods
  - Make water your drink of choice



# Avoid the “Good” or “Bad” Food Mentality

- All foods can have a place in a healthy diet – the key is moderation
- *Eat ‘food’, mostly plants, not too much*



# How to Separate Fact from Fiction?

- If it sounds too good to be true – it probably is!
- Look for health advice from organizations who use scientific evidence to make conclusions
  - Health Canada, Diabetes Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation
- Contact your community nutrition advisor with any nutrition questions you may have – we are here to support you!
- Email: [laura.white@canada.ca](mailto:laura.white@canada.ca) to find out who your nutrition advisor is

Any  
Questions