

SOUTH EAST CITY WOMEN

VENUS

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FOOD MYTHS

Do you know your food? How would you rate your knowledge on a scale of one to ten? There's so much conflicting information, so many theories, we thought we'd shine the light on a few for you. Emma Wells exposes some of the most common myths...

FAT IS BAD FOR YOU

This depends on what kind of fat it is. Your brain is made up of 60% fat – the kind you find in oily fish and seeds. Memory, mood and intelligence are dependent on these essential fats. Olive oil although not essential is known to reduce your risk of heart disease by affecting cholesterol levels. Saturated fat found in animal products such as red meat and dairy has an inflammatory effect in the body and increases risk of heart disease. Hydrogenated and trans fats are the good fats damaged by heat and refining – stay away from these as they block the action of the essential fats and also interfere with liver function and raise the risk of heart disease. They are found in many margarines, on the shelf oils and the majority of processed foods.

THE ATKINS DIET IS A GREAT WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT

An increased risk of heart disease due to the high 'bad' fats in the diet and a high risk of osteoporosis – the acidic state produced by the diet needs to be buffered so the body leaches calcium from the bones making them weaker – all this and more make the Atkins diet a risky option. The low fibre from lack of fresh fruit and vegetables could lead to an increase in serious digestive problems plus sub-optimum nutrition due to the lack of nutrients provided from these foods. Trials are expected to prove all of the above very soon and although the scientific jury is out, the majority of the medical establishment and nutritionists already don't support it and are just watching the catalogue of proof against the Atkins diet build up.

PARASITES COME FROM PLACES LIKE INDIA AND ONLY WHEN YOU EAT UNWASHED FRUIT

The British population is rife with parasites. Symptoms include irritable bowel, cramps/pain, bloating/wind, diarrhoea/constipation, allergies, aching joints, weight loss, poor sleep and appetite, anaemia and chronic fatigue. To minimise your risk of getting parasites you need to improve personal hygiene – your mum was right, you do need to wash your hands after every trip to the toilet. Cook food thoroughly, poorly cooked food or raw fish (think rare steak or sushi) add to your risk. Store food properly – raw meats and fish need to be stored under fresh fruit and salad in the fridge. Your pets also pose a risk – don't let them eat off your plates, walk on food prep surfaces, or lick your hands and face.



INDIGESTION IS ALL ABOUT TOO MUCH ACID

In some cases the worst thing you can do for indigestion is to take antacids. The cause may be too little acid rather than too much. Insufficient acid means food sits undigested in the stomach leading to bloating, burping and indigestion after a meal. Antacids just compound the problem of low stomach acid, which can lead to indigestion, food allergies, leaky gut, eczema, weak peeling nails, iron deficiency, parasites and digestive problems. If you suffer from indigestion try this simple test. Have a small glass of water with a teaspoon of cider vinegar or lemon juice and drink with each meal. If you experience a worsening of symptoms neutralize with a glass of milk or a teaspoon of baking soda in water. If things improve you can increase the vinegar/lemon juice by up to ten teaspoons.

ORGANIC FOOD IS A WASTE OF MONEY

A recent study published by the Soil Association showed that organic vegetables contain more nutrients than non-organic foods and also less water meaning you get more vegetable for your money. Organic food was also shown to contain fewer pesticides, no antibiotic residue, fewer nitrates, no food additives, no GMO's and have no increased risk of food borne bacteria such as salmonella and *e.coli*.

ALL VITAMINS ARE THE SAME, SO TO SAVE MONEY BUY THE CHEAPEST

Definitely not true. Vitamins come in many different forms, some more easily absorbable than others. Take calcium, the cheapest form calcium carbonate is far less easily absorbed than calcium citrate. Ferrous sulphate, the kind of iron you get from the doctor which causes constipation, is also very difficult for the body to absorb; try a true food form like spinach, or an amino acid chelate – meaning one that is bound to an amino acid that the body can easily absorb. Standardised extracts are the things to go for when buying herbs. You are guaranteed the same strength in each capsule and batch. Whole herb mixtures may contain leaves or roots that have no affect and you cannot guarantee the potency.

FAT CONTENT – MYTHS EXPOSED

Think that by buying reduced fat versions of something you're getting low fat food? It's not always the case. We took a look at some pasta sauces – their fat content, and impact on your wallet!



Tesco Original Pasta Sauce 88p

Per 100g – 35 calories, 0.1g fat

Tesco Healthy Options Original Pasta Sauce 88p

Per 100g – 34 calories, 0.1g fat

Not much difference there then!
At least they cost the same.

Sainsbury's Tomato & Herb Sauce 79p

Per 100g – 70 calories, 2g fat

Sainsbury's Be Good To Yourself Tomato & Herb Pasta 99p

Per 100g – 55 calories, 0.3g fat

Better than Tesco's but the low fat version is more expensive.



Waitrose Italian Napoletana Pasta Sauce £1.39

Per 100g – 58 calories, 3.6g fat

A bit more pricey,
but still pretty healthy

Lloyd Grossman Classic Tomato Sauce £1.65

Per 100g – 98 calories, 7.4g fat

At that cost to your waist and wallet,
it'd better taste good!

