



University of California  
Cooperative Extension  
Tulare County

Agriculture and Natural Resources



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**JUST THE FACTS, NOT THE FICTION**

What’s healthy? What’s not? One day a food is a miracle, the next day it will send us to the grave. With a daily bombardment of health, nutrition and diet information, it’s no wonder we’re confused. Although the quick-fix promises of the “diet of the day” may be alluring, don’t fall for nutrition fiction. Here’s the skinny on some common myths:

**Fiction:** Miracle diets that eliminate or focus solely on one food group or nutrient are an effective way to lose weight.

**Fact:** These types of diets can be dangerous. Although it may be possible to lose weight during the first few weeks, it’s usually water loss or a result of a dramatic reduction in calories, not a result of specific food(s) you’re eating or not eating.

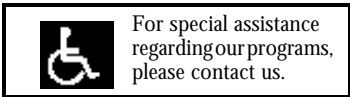
**Fiction:** Eating more protein and fewer carbohydrates is the safest way to lose weight.

**Fact:** The only sure way to shed pounds is by decreasing the calories you take in and increasing the calories you burn off. The nutrition community agrees that the healthiest way to cut calories is with an increase in physical activity and a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet rich in grains, fruits and vegetables.

**Fiction:** To see any benefits, I’ll have to spend an hour of rigorous activity at the gym each day.

**Fact:** If you’re still living the “no pain, no gain” philosophy when it come to exercise, think again! Medical research shows even 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day can make a difference in how you feel and

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look. Simple activities like walking up a flight of stairs and washing your car are easy ways to increase your daily activity level (thus increasing your metabolism) and burn calories.

**Fiction:** Bread and other grain foods are fattening.

**Fact:** The notion that these foods are fattening is simply a big, fat myth. Bread, cereal, pasta, tortillas, rice and other grain foods are naturally low in fat. In fact, one slice of bread averages only one gram of fat and 75 calories, the majority of which come from complex carbohydrates—a major source of fuel for your body.

**Fiction:** I already eat enough bread and other grain foods.

**Fact:** Although 76 percent of Americans think they get enough, on average, most Americans are at least a couple of servings shy of getting the recommended six to 11 daily servings of grain foods. Fortunately, it's easy to work more of these foods into your eating plan. Toast the new day with an extra slice of toast, try a tortilla on the side at lunch, snack on cereal or lower fat crackers and pass the bread-basket at dinner!

**Fiction:** A high-carbohydrate diet can make me insulin-resistant and, therefore, fat.

**Fact:** According to experts, being overweight is a contributing cause of insulin resistance, not a result. Losing weight is the most effective way to correct the problem. And eating a diet rich in grains, fruits, and vegetables—a diet that's generally high in carbohydrates—is the best dietary strategy for losing weight, even for insulin-resistant individuals.

**Source:** The State of America's Plate 1997, American Bakers Association, Wheat Foods Council

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