

Destroying the Myths and Finding the Facts about HEALTHY FOOD

You're enjoying a bucket of low-fat popcorn, caffeine-free soda, and one satisfying Twinkie—the usual—during a new episode of *House* when, out of nowhere, you feel like you're being pushed underwater. You lose sense of everything and you suddenly wish that the cast of *House* could jump off the TV screen and take you to their hospital. You wish they could smile and tell you that you only suffered a rare form of hysteria, pat you on the back, and send you back to consciousness. But you know that's never going to happen. Not right now, at least. Collapsing, breathing is a labor and black darkness is your only comfort. An imaginary twenty-ton weight is heaved onto your chest, and you clutch your heart in a feeble effort to lift it. You faintly hear screams and shouts somewhere in the background of this catastrophe. Ignoring them, you fall... fall into the deepest corner of your mind....

After a trip to the hospital, you wonder how in the world you had a heart attack. After all, you're not a drug-addict or a smoker, and you're 100% sure that you're too young for a heart attack. You eat everything in the low-fat version, not to mention adding only a pinch of salt instead of a regular two to your omelets. However you know you eat boxes of Twinkies to reward yourself every day, and you're a *tad* overweight. You also sit around the house 24/7, and you eat pretty much the same thing everyday. *That's* probably where you screwed up. But when you read this, you will be informed about what healthy foods you should eat. Because there are the fake healthy foods that hide behind wrappers (like those so-called fiber enhancing candy bars), and there are the real healthy foods. They're the ones that *truly* give you healthy vitamins and minerals—minus the chocolate and sugary monsters that interfere.

I know, I know. Starting off with a hypothetical heart attack situation may seem a little dramatic, even if the topic is about eating healthy foods. And just to clear things up, eating Twinkies daily doesn't necessarily mean you'll suffer a heart attack. However it *does* affect your healthiness. You don't need a doctor to tell you that. The British Medical Journal states that about 94 million Americans are obese as we speak. That's over 30% of

our population! Many people believe that eating less is much better than stuffing your face with doughnuts. Surprisingly, this myth is *partially* correct. You're definitely eating healthier when you're not digesting every edible thing that comes your way, but of course a spoonful of cereal everyday doesn't improve your health either. Health experts suggest that you eat regular-sized servings every meal, ideally covering the whole food pyramid along with their correct amounts daily. For a glimpse at how food pyramids work and how much of each section you're suggested to eat, there's a plentiful amount of models on the Internet.

You see it everywhere you turn your head (unless you uncommonly live in a cave)—new ideas for diets and things you should and shouldn't eat. Things like "You should eat salad for every meal and every day to make you skinnier," or "Eating vegetables is way healthier than eating meat," are just a few of the stereotypical rumors around the block. These rumors also have some truths to them. For example, eating salad is *very* healthy for you. Crunchy lettuce is known to be rich in iron, Vitamin E, and Vitamin C. This tasteless but beneficial veggie can also prevent balding, which is always a plus. But then again, you're missing an abundance of minerals from meat and fish. Cut out meat from your diet, and you'll lose omega-3 (which is considered a "good fat" because it improves your body's health), milli-tons of protein, and many "B" vitamins. For those vegetarians out there, Vons and other local grocery stores have you covered. Have you seen what's in their meat aisles? It's loaded to the brim with special vegetarian Tofu burgers, unnamed soy products, and "Wheat Meat", which is also referred to as Seitan. As you can see, salad-only diets aren't necessary, even if you're a vegetarian.

Fiber-enhancing candy bars; they seem harmless, maybe even healthy for you. Yes, they taste good. Yes, they give you fiber. But how is "candy" healthy for you? Truth is, most types of candy aren't at all that healthy. However a few years ago, health experts discovered one type of a healthy chocolate (cue the Hallelujah chorus). Experts concluded that the darker the chocolate, the healthier it is. Sounds a little too good to be true, right? But Naturalnews.com states that dark chocolate has special nutrients inside to prevent blood clots, and even helps regulate your blood pressure! This is because of the flavanol content. Flavanol is known to "prevent cardiovascular disease and cancer" (International Journal of Medical Sciences). But even if chocolate is somewhat healthy

for you, that doesn't mean you should eat five pounds of it every day and hope that you'll never ever get cancer. It's still high in sugar, calories, and fat. My advice? Buy a Hershey Bar. Stick it in your fridge and at the end of each day, reward yourself with one piece of the delicacy. It's something to look forward to and it gives you a chance to relax after a day of work. Because in a world of healthy food, it doesn't hurt to indulge yourself every now and then.

These three myths I have found and destroyed aren't even the tip of the iceberg when it comes to healthy food. But don't worry. Google is there for you in your time of inquiries. So just to sum things up, over a third of the American population is obese, which is one third too much. Eat one piece of the food pyramid each meal to control your food intake. Vegetables are beneficial to you, but if you're only eating vegetables, you're missing valuable vitamins from meat. There are alternatives to meat, so vegetarians shouldn't have any excuses. Not all candy is good for you, but dark chocolate helps you fight cardiovascular disease (but it's still considered a fatty food). Hopefully, this'll help you in your future battles against food—the masked and the *real*.