

Digging up the Dirt on Dieting

The truth about dieting and healthier alternatives

Dieting \neq Healthy Eating	
<p>Dieting is when you restrict what you eat to lose weight.</p> <p>Examples of weight loss diets are: high protein, low carb, low fat, fasting, skipping meals, low calorie (i.e. counting calories or points), eating only certain foods such as grapefruit.</p>	<p>Healthy eating is a life-long way of eating. It means choosing a wide variety of food: most are healthy, but there is also some room for food that does not fit into Canada's Food Guide.</p>

True or False?

Most dieters will regain the weight they lost while dieting.

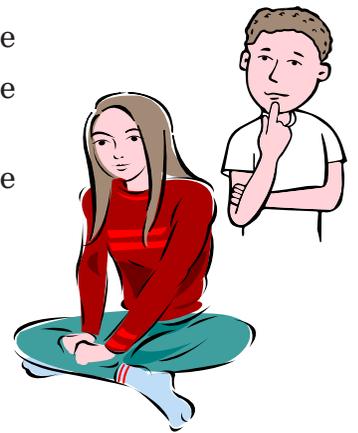
True False

The risk of gaining more fat increases after dieting.

True False

People who diet are twice as likely to be overweight 5 years later as those who do not.

True False



These statements are all true.

What happens to your body when you are dieting?

You skip meals and you ignore your hunger cues by eating less

- Your body burns fewer calories because it thinks you are starving.
- Your brain does not work as well and you have a harder time concentrating, thinking and staying awake.
- You become grumpy more easily.
- You may overeat later on in the day.



You cut most carbs (carbohydrates) such as grain products

- You miss out on important vitamins and minerals.
- Your body breaks down some of your muscles for fuel. This can cause bad breath, headaches and low energy levels.

You limit fat such as oils, margarine, nuts

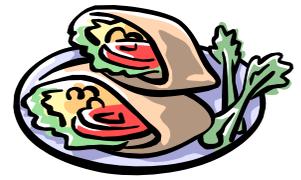
- Your skin and hair look less healthy.
- You do not feel as satisfied at meals and snacks, so you tend to eat more.

You fast, or take diet pills or laxatives

- You lose water, rather than losing any real weight. There is no magic pill for weight loss.

Dieting can be very emotional - it is linked with lower self-esteem, depression or feeling lousy.

To be healthy and to be at a body weight that is right for you without dieting:



Eat Well

	Yes	Sometimes	No
Do you eat with your family or friends? Eating meals with your family is linked to better health and eating habits.			
Do you enjoy a variety food? There are no “bad” foods. Include choices from Canada’s Food Guide to make up most of your meals and snacks.			
Do you use Canada’s Food Guide to help you choose healthy meals and snacks? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to have 2 food groups for each snack. ▪ Try to have 3-4 food groups at each meal. www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide			
Do you satisfy your thirst with water, milk or fortified soy beverage and limit the amount of juice and pop you drink? Aim for at least 500mL of milk or fortified soy beverage daily.			
Do you eat regularly throughout the day? This might mean 3 meals with snacks in-between or 5-6 mini-meals.			
Do you take at least 20 minutes to eat and enjoy your meals? Slowing down helps your body recognize when you are full.			
Do you eat breakfast? Breakfast gives you energy to start your day. Find what works for you - leftovers, smoothie or a sandwich are some options.			
Do you eat mindfully? Avoid eating in front of the TV or computer or checking your mobile phone.			
Do you listen to your body’s hunger and fullness cues? Eat when you are hungry, and stop when you feel full.			
Do you pay attention to portion size? Share large portions with friends. Put food on a plate rather than eating from the box or bag.			

Congratulate yourself on all the questions to which you answered “yes”. For the questions to which you answered “no” or “sometimes”, work on them one at a time until you have answered “yes” to all of them. Be patient with yourself—making healthy eating part of your everyday routine can take time!

For more information on healthy eating, see the handout “[Fueling Your Mind and Body](#)”.

Be Active

- Being active doesn’t have to mean going to the gym. Try activities that you find fun like walking, dancing, yoga, volleyball, hiking, or rollerblading.
- Enjoy the benefits you get from being active: more energy, lower stress, stronger bones, better sleep and a lower risk for some diseases.



Have a Positive Attitude

- Remember that 50-80% of your body shape and size is determined by your genes.
- It is normal for many children to gain weight before growing taller during puberty.
- Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes. Accept and respect yourself and others.
- Go easy on yourself; be happy with small changes you make to be healthier.
- **Care for, rather than compare your body to others.**

For more information:

Talk to your doctor, public health nurse, school counsellor or call 8-1-1 to speak to a dietitian or nurse.