Top 10 Destructive Nutrition Lies Ever Told

(Dr. Mercola) There is no shortage of health advice out there, and no shortage of bad advice to go along with it. Some misguided notions are harmless—but others are *outright dangerous* and can lead you down the road to chronic health problems and may even trim years off your life.

It is critically important to decipher fact from fiction. Many nutrition myths get repeated over and over until they are mistaken for truth, especially when perpetually spread by public health authorities.

But the good news is that slowly, the real truth finally appears to be reaching mainstream audiences, as evidenced by the eagerness of satirists to take a jab at the food industry, as in the clever Coca-Cola parody featured above.

In an article addressing destructive nutrition lies, Kris Gunnars of Authority Nutrition[1] is among those admirably trying to bust the dangerous dietary myths that continue being spread by so many nutritionists. I agree with the majority of his points, but have added a few others that I believe to be important. Read on for my own top 10 list, which builds upon his.

Lie #1: Breakfast Is the Healthiest Meal of the Day, and You Should Eat Many Small Meals a Day

There is now a good deal of research supporting the health benefits of intermittent fasting—which is what you are really doing whenever you zip out of the house in the morning without breakfast.

Recent studies suggest that intermittent fasting can provide the same health benefits as constant calorie restriction which many studies have shown to dramatically increase life span in animals. It may also be helpful for those who cannot successfully reduce their everyday calorie intake.

Besides turning you into an efficient fat burner, intermittent fasting can also boost your level of human growth hormone production (aka the "fitness hormone") by as much as 1,200 percent for women and 2,000 percent for men.

Intermittent fasting and continuous calorie restriction have both been shown to produce weight loss and improve metabolic risk markers. However, intermittent fasting tends to be slightly more effective for reducing insulin resistance.

Other benefits include reducing inflammation, improving blood pressure, and increased lean body mass. Intermittent fasting can also improve your brain function by increasing levels of BDNF, a protein that protects your brain cells from the changes associated with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

There are several types of intermittent fasting to choose from, so I recommend experimenting to see what style works best for you. One of the easiest, however, is to simply skip breakfast, and limit your eating to a narrow window of time each day—say between 11am and 7pm, to start. You can review my more comprehensive article on intermittent fasting for more details.

The advice to "eat six small meals per day" comes from seemingly logical principles (portion control, keeping your energy up, stabilizing blood sugar, etc.), but in reality, eating this way has not been shown to provide these benefits. We seem to need periods of fasting for optimal metabolic function.

And if you think about it, our ancient ancestors never had access to a grocery store 24/7 and they went through regular

periods of feast and famine. The problem is that most of us are in 24/7 feast mode. Implementing intermittent fasting is the quickest way I know of to jump start your body into burning fat as its primary fuel again.

Lie #2: Saturated Fat Causes Heart Disease

The dangerous recommendation to avoid saturated fat, which arose from an*unproven hypothesis* from the mid-1950s, has been harming people's health for about 40 years now. As recently as 2002, the "expert" Food & Nutrition Board issued the following misguided statement, which epitomizes this myth:

"Saturated fats and dietary cholesterol have no known beneficial role in preventing chronic disease and are not required at any level in the diet."

Similarly, the National Academies' Institute of Medicine recommends that adults get 45-65 percent of their calories from carbohydrates, 20-35 percent from fat, and 10-35 percent from protein. This is the polar opposite of an ideal fat to carb ratio and virtually guarantees you a heightened risk of disease.

Most people benefit from a diet where 50-85 percent of daily calories are derived from healthful fats. However, you need very few, if any, carbohydrates for optimal health. Although that amount of fat may seem like a lot, fat is very calorie-dense, and will therefore still constitute the smallest amount, in terms of volume, on your plate.

The truth is, saturated fats from animal and vegetable sources provide the building blocks for your cell membranes and a variety of hormones and hormone-like substances, without which your body cannot function optimally.

Fats also serve as carriers for the fat-soluble vitamins A, D,

E, and K and are required for converting carotene into vitamin A, absorbing minerals, and a host of other important biological processes. Saturated fat is also the preferred fuel for your heart! Good sources of healthy fats to add to your diet include:

Avocados	Butter made from raw grass-fed organic milk	Raw dairy	Organic pastured egg yolks
Coconuts and coconut oil	Unheated organic nut oils	Raw nuts, especially macadamia, and raw seeds	Grass-fed and finished meats

Lie #3: High Omega-6 Seed and Vegetable Oils Are Good for You

Of all the health-destroying foods on the market, those made with highly processed vegetable and seed oils are some of the worst. When consumed in large amounts, as they are by most Americans, they seriously distort your important omega-3 to omega-6 ratio. In a perfect world, this ratio is 1:1—but the average American is getting *20 to 50 times more omega-6 fats than omega-3 fats.* Excessive omega-6 fats from processed foods significantly increase your risk for heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and many other illnesses.

The cholesterol found in arterial plaque is oxidized, damaged cholesterol, which your immune system identifies as bacteria. In response, your immune system sends out macrophages to attack it, which creates inflammation inside your artery walls. A major factor driving heart disease is this oxidized cholesterol, which you introduce into your body every time you consume vegetable oils, or foods cooked in them.

Many vegetable and seed oils are also genetically engineered, which only compounds their health risk. More than 90 percent of US canola oil is GE. So what's the best oil to cook with? Of all the available oils, coconut oil is the one of choice for cooking because it's close to a completely saturated fat—meaning, much less susceptible to heat damage. And coconut oil is one of the most nutritionally beneficial fats. For more information about coconut oil, please see our special report. Olive oil, while certainly a healthful oil, is easily damaged by heat and is best reserved for drizzling cold over salad.

Lie #4: Artificial Sweeteners Are Safe Sugar Replacements for Diabetics, and Help Promote Weight Loss

Most people use artificial sweeteners to lose weight and/or because they are diabetic and need to avoid sugar. The irony is that nearly all of the studies to date show that artificial sweeteners cause even MORE weight gainthan caloric sweeteners. Studies also show that artificial sweeteners can be worse than sugar for diabetics.

In 2005, data gathered from the 25-year long San Antonio Heart Study showed that drinking dietsoft drinks increased the likelihood of serious weight gain much more so than regular soda.2 On average, each diet soda the participants consumed per day increased their risk of becoming overweight by 65 percent within the next seven to eight years and made them 41 percent more likely to become obese. There are several possible reasons for this, such as:

- Sweet taste alone appears to increase hunger, regardless of caloric content
- Artificial sweeteners appear to perpetuate a craving for sweets, and overall sugar consumption is therefore not

reduced, leading to further problems with weight control[3]

- Artificial sweeteners may disrupt your body's natural ability to "count calories," as evidenced by multiple studies. For example, a Purdue University study found that rats fed artificially sweetened liquids ate more high-calorie food than rats fed high-caloric sweetened liquids[4]

The list of health risks associated with artificial sweeteners, particularly aspartame, continues to expand. I maintain an ongoing list of studies related to the detrimental effects of aspartame, which I recommend you review for yourself if you are still on the fence. I invite you to watch my aspartame video, as well.

Lie #5: Soy Is a Health Food

The meteoric rise of soy as a "health food" is a perfect example of how a brilliant marketing strategy can fool millions. But make no mistake—unfermented soy products are NOT healthful additions to your diet, regardless of your age or gender. I am not opposed to *all soy*—properly fermented and preferably organic soy, such as tempeh, miso, and natto, offer great health benefits, courtesy of the beneficial bacteria (probiotics) the fermentation process produces.

Thousands of studies have linked *unfermented* soy to a number of health problems, however. More than 90 percent of American soy crops are also genetically engineered, which only compounds its health risks.[5] If you find this information startling, then I would encourage you to review some of the articles on my Soy Page. The following table lists a number of the damaging health effects science has linked to unfermented soy:

Breast cancer	Brain damage and cognitive impairment	Heart disease
Thyroid disorders	Kidney stones	Immune dysfunction
Severe, potentially fatal food allergies	Malnutrition	Digestive problems
Problems with pregnancy and breastfeeding	Reproductive disorders and impaired fertility	Developmental abnormalities in infants

Lie #6: Whole Grains Are Good for Everyone

The use of whole grains is an easy subject to get confused about, especially for those with a passion for health and nutrition. For the longest time, we've been told that whole grains are highly beneficial. Unfortunately, ALL grains can elevate your insulin and leptin levels, even whole grains and organic varieties—and elevated insulin/leptin increases your risk of chronic disease. This is especially true if you already struggle with insulin/leptin resistance, which would manifest as high blood pressure, distorted cholesterol ratios, being overweight, or diabetes).

It has been my experience that more than 85 percent of Americans have trouble controlling their insulin and leptin levels and have one or more of the symptoms listed above. You may be one of those if you struggle to maintain an ideal body weight and body composition, tend to accumulate fat around you belly, or have a suboptimal lipid profile. In fact, insulin/leptin dysregulation is a common indicator for many of the diseases so prevalent today, such as diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and cancer.

Many whole grains also contain gluten, which is a common trigger for allergies and sensitivities. Subclinical gluten

intolerance is far more common than you might think, with symptoms that are not always obvious. I strongly recommend eliminating or at least restricting grains from your diet, as well as sugars/fructose, especially if you have any of the conditions listed above. As a general rule, the higher your insulin levels are, the greater your grain restriction should be.

Lie #7: Genetically Engineered Foods Are Safe and Comparable to Conventional Foods

Genetic engineering (GE) of our food may be the most dangerous aspect of our food supply today. I strongly recommend that you avoid ALL GE foods. Since more than 90 percent of the corn and 95 percent of the soy grown in the US are GE, then you can count on virtually every processed food having at least one GE component if it doesn't bear the "USDA 100% Organic" or non-GMO label. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of them is that the crops are saturated with one of the most dangerous herbicides on the market, glyphosate, to the tune of nearly a billion pounds per year. This toxic chemical can't be washed off as it becomes integrated into nearly every cell of the plant, and then gets transferred into your body.

No one knows exactly what will be the ultimate impact of these foods on your health, particularly over the long term. Animal studies have pointed to increased disease, infertility, and birth defects as the top contenders. The first-ever lifetime feeding study showed a dramatic increase in organ damage, cancer, and reduced lifespan. It's important to realize that, unless you're buying all organic food or growing your own, you're probably consuming GE foods on a daily basis. In order to avoid as many GE foods as possible, be aware that the following common crops are likely to be GE unless otherwise labeled:

Corn	Canola	Alfalfa
Soy	Cottonseed	Sugar from sugar beets
Zucchini	Crookneck squash	Hawaiian papaya

Lie #8: Eggs Are Bad for Your Heart

Eggs are one of the most demonized foods in the US… thanks to the cholesterol myth. The misguided belief that cholesterol, such as in egg yolks, will give you heart disease is simply untrue (see Lie #1). Studies have shown that eggs do NOT have a detrimental impact on cholesterol levels and are actually one of the most healthful foods you can eat. In one Yale study,6 participants were asked to consume two eggs daily for six weeks. Researchers found that this egg consumption did not spike cholesterol levels and did not have a negative effect on endothelial function, a measure of cardiac risk.

Choose pasture-raised organic eggs, and avoid "omega-3 eggs" as this is not the proper way to optimize your omega-3 levels. To produce these omega-3 eggs, the hens are usually fed poor-quality sources of omega-3 fats that are already oxidized. Omega-3 eggs are also more perishable than non-omega-3 eggs. Some of the many nutritional benefits of eggs are summarized for you in the table below.

One egg contains six grams of high quality **protein** and all nine essential **amino acids**	Beneficial for eye health due to **lutein and zeaxanthin**, antioxidants in your lens and retina that help prevent eye diseases such as macular degeneration and cataracts	Good source of **choline**, a member of the vitamin B family (essential for nervous system, cardiovascular system, and prenatal brain development)

Vitamin D: eggs are one of the few foods that contains naturally occurring vitamin D (24.5 grams)	**Sulfur** (essential component of glutathione, also promotes healthy hair and nails)	Many other **vitamins and minerals** (B vitamins, vitamins A and E, calcium, copper, iodine, iron, magnesium, potassium, selenium, and zinc)

Lie #9: Low-Fat Foods Prevent Obesity and Heart Disease

Conventional recommendations over the past 40 years or more have called for drastically decreasing the overall fat in your diet, but this fat aversion is a driving force behind today's metabolic dysfunction, obesity, and ill health. As discussed earlier, most people need between 50 and 85 percent of their calories from fats—a far cry form the *less than 10 percent* from saturated fat recommended by the USDA![7] Kris Gunnars stated it quite nicely:[8]

"The first dietary guidelines for Americans were published in the year 1977, almost at the exact same time the obesity epidemic started. Of course, this doesn't prove anything (correlation does not equal causation), but it makes sense that this could be more than just a mere coincidence.

The anti-fat message essentially put the blame on saturated fat and cholesterol (harmless), while giving sugar and refined carbs (very unhealthy) a free pass. Since the guidelines were published, many massive studies have been conducted on the low-fat diet. It is no better at preventing heart disease, obesity or cancer than the standard Western diet, which is as

unhealthy as a diet can get."

Let's face it, if low-fat diets worked, the United States would be the healthiest nation on the planet—folks have been following them since the late 1970s! But if you look at the following graph, you can see that America's waistline has done nothing but expand since then. There's no telling how many people have been prematurely killed by following these flawed guidelines. Yet, despite mounting research to the contrary, low-fat diets are stillbeing pushed as "heart healthy" by the majority of nutritionists, cardiologists, and the like.



Lie #10: Carbs Should Be Your Biggest Source of Calories

I have already covered how insulin resistance is a key factor in disease (see Lie #4). A diet high in non-fiber carbohydrates—particularly processed grains and sugar—leads directly to insulin and leptin resistance. When your highest percentage of calories comes from healthful fats, these problems just don't exist. Most high-carb diets are high in sugar and starch, not vegetables. When the low-fat mantra swept over the country, the high-carb craze soon followed. When fat was removed from foods, *something* had to be added back in to make foods more palatable—and that something was sugar. Particularly, highly concentrated forms of fructose, such as high fructose corn syrup, which spell metabolic disaster for your body.

With fat being the identified villain (albeit falsely accused), sugar was completely ignored—even though sugar was the *real*culprit behind inflammation, metabolic dysfunction, diabetes, and heart disease. America's love of sugar was a boon to the processed food industry—which added fructose to practically everything from soup to nuts… literally. If you

want to see what effects this had on the country's health and belt size, just turn on your national news.

A high-carb diet disrupts your insulin and leptin signaling, and over time may very well result in type 2 diabetes. By contrast, a diet higher in beneficial fats corrects these metabolic issues. Recent research has demonstrated that the ketogenic diet—one marked by carbohydrate restriction and substantial healthful fats—extended the lifespan of mice by 20 percent, because it optimized their insulin sensitivity and other metabolic processes. There is evidence that low carbohydrate diets, combined with appropriate amounts of protein, can even slow down Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

Now for the #1 Truth…

The more you can eat like your ancestors, the better—fresh whole foods, locally and sustainably raised, and foods that are minimally processed or not processed at all. These are the types of foods that your genes and biochemistry are adapted to and will provide you with the ability to reverse and prevent most diseases. You will find these at your local farmer's market, food co-op, or in your own backyard garden. And you will be amazed at the positive changes you'll see in your health when you "clean up" your diet! Be wary of nutritional advice from mainstream "experts" as it may not be based on science—or based on bad information that is several decades outdated. Truthful, accurate information is your number one weapon in taking control of your health.

Recommended Reading:

- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Gluten, Candida, Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases*
- *Hypothyroidism – Natural Remedies, Causes, and How To Heal the Thyroid*
- *Total Nutrition – Make ˚your own Homemade Multivitamin*

and Mineral Formula