Written by Nicole Winbush MD
Friday, 17 August 2012 14:05

In my last article I discussed five common weight loss myths. To recap these were:

Myth 1 - Skipping breakfast is a great way to lose weight
Myth 2 - Drinking diet or sugar free sodas, teas or fruit drinks are a good alternative

Myth 3 - If it is low fat or fat-free it has got to be good for me and will help me lose weight

Myth 4 - You have to feel hungry a lot. That is how you know you are losing weight

Myth 5 - I do everything by myself. Losing weight is no different

If you did not read the first article you can find it archived at insightnews.com or at my website functionwellmedicine.com
. Here are the next five myths.

Myth 6 - A good diet is one that will help me lose a lot of weight quickly
If you starve yourself for a week, you may lose 5 or even 10 pounds. However, you cannot starve yourself forever. Eventually you have to eat. When you eat less, your metabolism will slow down. All of a sudden that 1200 calorie a day diet that you managed to lose 10 pounds on the month before will not result in any weight loss and when you return to eating a more normal amount of calories, you are likely to gain weight.

Myth 7 - I exercised today so I can eat what I want
Fact, exercise is ESSENTIAL to achieving optimal health and maintaining weight loss. However, your diet is the foundation. Consider this, in a few minutes you can eat more calories than you burned during an exercise session. As an example, 30 minutes of fast walking burns about 200 calories. If you then drink a 16 oz soda it has 220 calories, you have taken in more than you burned. You haven't lost anything. When you exercise, you are going to get hungrier (especially in the beginning). Without much effort you can eat all of the calories and more that you burned with a poorly chosen post-exercise snack or meal. So, it is important to be aware of the increased hunger that comes with exercise and plan to snack smartly on things that will satisfy and not add lots of calories. Also, do not look at exercise as the key component to

weight loss. Exercise will help you maintain weight loss through improving your metabolism but dietary changes are the cornerstone.

Myth 8 - I can eat what I want as long as I eat less of it
Fact, If you want to lose weight and maintain it, there are some foods that need to be on the (almost) never list. Your body is more likely to make these food into fat storage. The foods to avoid are chosen because of their limited or non-existent nutritional value and their addictive quality and include: sodas, sweet teas, energy drinks and fruit juices (naturally and artificially sweetened), french fries and potato chips.

Myth 9 - If I only eat a few things (e.g. cabbage, grapefruit, chocolate chip cookies), I will lose weight
Fact, fad diets are nutritionally unsound and not sustainable. You may lose weight on these initially but once the novelty of being able to eat as many chocolate chip cookies or hamburgers as you like wears off, you get bored and for a short time eat less. Then, you break the diet and go on a binge and likely end up gaining more weight than you lost. Leaving you worse off than you started.

Myth 10 - That new diet pill, shot, powder or surgery is the thing that will make me thin
Most of the supplements that are marketed are poorly regulated and may have dangerous side effects and often have not been shown to work in the long term. Weight loss surgery has become more and more common. This may be a consideration for severely overweight people with critical health issues that require rapid weight loss (diabetes, heart disease, etc). However, the risks and benefits must be weighed. It also concerns me that insurance companies are often willing to pay for this expensive and risky procedure but are not willing to pay for individuals to get intensive nutritional counseling and and support that might allow them to make changes and lose weight that would make surgery unnecessary. These products and procedures also shift the emphasis from where it needs to be: on the foods that we eat, the activities in which we participate, on pressuring our local and national governments to establish systems that support access to affordable healthy food choices in our communities and a health care system that emphasizes maintaining health over treating sickness.

The information contained herein should NOT be used as a substitute for the advice of an appropriately qualified and licensed physician or other health care provider. The information provided here is for educational and informational purposes only. In no way should it be considered as offering medical advice. Please check with a healthcare provider if you suspect you are ill.

Dr. Winbush is a family physician practicing at NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center. She has a strong interest in wellness and patient education to help individuals feel empowered to optimize their health and functioning. For more information and additional resources as mentioned in the article visit www.functionwellmedicine.com.