

55 Rampant Health Myths That Need to Die

Your mother lied to you: Carrots will not improve your eyesight.

By [Charlotte Hilton Andersen](#)

Myth: Alcohol warms you up



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"Perception versus reality can cause people to report things that simply aren't true. For example, if you ask a study participant 'Does alcohol warm you up?' the answer may very well be yes. But, that's not what's really happening in your body. Alcohol causes your blood vessels to dilate, moving warm blood closer to the skin and making you feel warm. But in reality this causes you to actually [lose body heat faster](#) . " — *Matthew Amsden, expert in research protocol and analysis and CEO of [ProofPilot](#)*

Myth: Deodorant causes cancer



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"That makes a great headline, but a few researchers used techniques that show correlation—not causation, and there's a big difference. Humans and the world we live in are complex so it's very unlikely that one particular behavior [causes cancer](#) . It's likely a complex combination of genetics, environment, and behaviors. In addition, follow-up studies haven't been able to corroborate a link." — *Matthew Amsden, expert in research protocol and analysis and CEO of [ProofPilot](#)* (If you're still concerned, try these [homemade deodorants](#) .)

Myth: Carrots are good for your eyes



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"While carrots are a [healthy snack](#) , and they do contain a vitamin A precursor (beta-carotene), the conversion of beta-carotene to vitamin A in the body is limited. Almost everyone in America already has plenty of vitamin A stored in their liver. And even if we supplement with beta-carotene or vitamin A, it won't change the 'refractive error' or glasses prescription needed to see clearly." — *Jeff Anshel, OD, FAAO, E Street Eyes and founder, Ocular Nutrition Society*

Myth: Bottled water is better than tap water



"Global bottled water sales have skyrocketed over the past several decades thanks to the misguided belief that 'spring water' is healthier or cleaner than the water that comes out of your tap. Bottled water is generally not worse or better than tap water because [over 50 percent of it is just tap water](#) . Plus the EPA publishes detailed data about water quality, while most bottled water companies won't tell you anything." — *Morton Tavel , MD, clinical professor emeritus of medicine, Indiana University School of Medicine*

Myth: Put butter or ice on a burn



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"Most of the damage from a burn actually comes from the skin's inflammatory response to it. The best way to keep a partial thickness burn from going to full thickness is to immediately immerse the burn in cool water. Makes sense, right? That feels good and the body has learned how to protect itself. Butter, however, spreads heat very effectively so it will actually make a burn worse . Ice can damage cells and has also been shown to make burns worse." — [Amy Baxter](#) , MD, emergency pediatrician, founder and CEO of MMJ Labs LLC (You can also try these [home remedies to treat burns](#) .)

Myth: Vaccines cause autism and are dangerous



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"Parents understandably feel really weird about their kids getting so many injections at once. That said, the immune load of the current [vaccines](#) is a fraction of what it was 30

years ago—we've gotten much more precise at teaching the immune system what it needs to know to fight disease. Some people have worried that Thimerosal, a preservative used in older vaccines, causes autism, but the truth is it wasn't the dangerous kind of mercury, it was the naturally occurring kind. And regardless it was removed from all vaccines in 2002. The true risk of vaccines is children becoming afraid of getting healthcare when they're older—and parents' anxiety doesn't help. For more information I have done [TEDx](#) and [TEDMED](#) talks about misconceptions about vaccines." — [Amy Baxter](#) , MD, emergency pediatrician, founder and CEO of MMJ Labs LLC

Myth: You can "detox" your body with special diets



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"People are obsessed with finding a quick fix or the one cure for all their health problems, but the truth is there isn't one. So-called detoxes with juices or other liquids don't have unique powers to [help you lose weight](#) , [clear up acne](#) , or even purge toxins from your system—that's your liver's job and it does it quite well. Instead of seeking a brief detox regimen try incorporating a few small but meaningful life changes. My favorite 'detox' is to plan a trip somewhere outdoors with bad cell phone reception." — [Elizabeth Trattner](#) , AP, doctor of oriental and integrative medicine

Myth: The flu shot can give you the flu



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"The viruses in the [flu shot](#) are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Minor side effects, including soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, a low grade fever, and/or aches may occur. These side effects begin soon after the shot and usually last one to two days. Almost all people who receive the influenza vaccine have no serious problems as a result of receiving it." — *Jeremy Blais, Pharm.D., CVS Pharmacy*

Myth: Humans only use 10 percent of our brains



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"This is categorically false. We use the majority of our brains the majority of the time. For instance, a simple task like getting a glass of water requires neuronal activity from at least five distinct areas of the brain to signal thirst, coordinate the movements, signal

satiety, and keep us upright throughout. If such a simple task requires this much effort and coordination, one can imagine how much more brain power quantum mechanics requires. Therefore, we use the majority of our brains for most tasks—simple or involved." — [Abhishiek Sharma](#) , MD, a neurosurgeon practicing in Scottsdale, AZ

Myth: Going outside with wet hair will make you sick



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"It's the virus, not the cold air that makes you sick. Without exposure to the common cold virus, you can go outside in the extreme cold with your hair drenching wet and it would be impossible to catch a cold. In fact, there's a whole group of people today that seek out cold temperatures to improve immunity and performance. Is there a correlation? Yes. But according to recent research it is because rhinovirus, the virus that causes the common cold, thrives in low temperatures. But the cold doesn't cause the virus." — *Matthew Amsden, expert in research protocol and analysis and CEO of [ProofPilot](#)* . (Watch out for the [signs a cold is coming](#) .)

Myth: If you're logical, you're left-brained; creative types are right-brained



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"There is no significant evidence to support the notion that certain people are left-brained and logical while others are right-brained and creative. The myth is based on early surgeries in seizure patients where, in an attempt to attribute different functions to different parts of the brain, it was found that visuospatial information was processed better in the right hemisphere while verbal information was processed better in the left hemisphere. But brain scans of healthy people have found that both creative and logical activities cause widespread activation of neural networks on the left and right hemispheres of the brain." — [Abhishiek Sharma](#) , MD, a neurosurgeon practicing in Scottsdale, AZ

Myth: You must drink eight glasses of water daily



" [You should drink to your thirst](#) , not to meet an arbitrary number of cups or ounces. And if you're worried about your skin you would have to be drastically and dangerously dehydrated (not having any water for many days) before your skin would show any signs of suffering or distress. Skin dries out from the outside due to low humidity and moisturizer much faster than from the inside." — [Neal Schultz](#) , MD, NYC dermatologist, founder of [DermTv.com](#) and creator of [BeautyRx](#)

Myth: Getting a base tan will prevent sunburns



"No amount of tanning is safe or a good idea. A tan is actually the earliest sign of sun-induced DNA damage in our skin. Studies have shown that the additional melanin produced while tanning provides very minimal protection overall, roughly equivalent to applying a sunscreen with a SPF of 3 or less. Moreover, tanning has been shown to cause premature aging (skin discoloration, fine lines, wrinkles, and sagging), and significantly increases our risk of skin cancer. At the end of the day, it's best to avoid tanning altogether, and to apply a good, broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 before any sun exposure." — [Faiyaaz Kalimullah](#) , MD, board-certified dermatologist at the Center for Dermatology and Aesthetic Medicine in Chicago, IL. (These are the [skin cancer myths you could be ignoring](#) .)

Myth: If you cross your eyes, they'll stay that way



iStock/ideabug

"This is utter hogwash designed by moms to scare kids out of doing this intentionally. You cannot make your eyes 'stick' by making any kind of face." — *Jeff Anshel, OD, FAAO, E Street Eyes and founder, Ocular Nutrition Society*

Myth: Erectile dysfunction is mental



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"Erectile dysfunction is not 'all in your head,' and can be a sign of more serious issues such as [vascular disease](#). Researchers have found strong links between ED and diabetes, high cholesterol, cigarette smoking, hypertension, obesity, and heart disease. It's not a situation in which you can think your way better." — *Harland Thomas Holman, MD, a physician at Spectrum Health Medical Group*

Myth: Vaccinations are just for kids



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"Just because you're an adult doesn't mean you have all your vaccinations. The tetanus shot was updated to include the pertussis vaccine, which is recommended every 10 years. While tetanus is rare, pertussis outbreaks have been increasing, and preventing it is particularly important if you have young children in the family. Anyone who smokes, has a chronic health condition, or is over 65 should consider the pneumonia vaccine and the shingles vaccine. And don't forget the yearly flu shot." — [Harland Thomas Holman](#), MD, a physician at Spectrum Health Medical Group

Myth: If you can walk on it, it's not broken



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"Just because you can move your foot, ankle, or other body part, or walk on it, after an injury does not mean that it is not broken. Ligaments, tendons, and muscles hold the

bones together, and a broken bone can still move. Moving a broken bone in some cases can cause it to shift, separate or displace, necessitating correction by an orthopaedic surgeon with a cast or even surgery." — [Steven Neufeld](#) , MD, orthopaedic surgeon with *The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics*

Myth: Sunscreen causes cancer



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"Some patients believe that the chemicals in sunscreens cause cancer. However this has never been proven, and the studies linking the two are greatly flawed. If you take a sample of people, the ones that wear sunscreen are far more likely to be at risk for skin cancer and have lighter skin types. These people are naturally more prone to skin cancer and also wearing sunscreen as they burn easily but this does not mean the sunscreen is causing the cancer—without it they'd have far more cancer!" — [Eric Meinhardt](#) , MD, dermatologist at *California Dermatology Specialists*. (Here's [what the labels on your sunscreen really mean](#) .)

Myth: Cracking your knuckles will give you arthritis



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"Recent research hasn't been able to [show a link between knuckle-cracking and arthritis](#) . Most early studies on this topic rely on participants self-evaluating their knuckle-cracking habit over many years, and then correlating that with reports of arthritis. Studies based on people's memories are not very accurate, and the risk of [arthritis](#) naturally increases as we age." — *Matthew Amsden, expert in research protocol and analysis and CEO of [ProofPilot](#)*

Myth: Barefoot is the best way to walk



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"There's a popular trend now that says not wearing shoes is good for your feet, but that is not necessarily true. Walking barefoot makes your feet susceptible to cuts, scrapes,

wounds, and even fungal nail infections." — [Steven Neufeld](#) , MD, orthopaedic surgeon with *The Centers for Advanced Orthopaedics*. (These are the [subtle signs of disease that your feet can reveal](#) .)

Myth: If someone is having a seizure, put a spoon in their mouth so they don't swallow their tongue



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"Seizures can be very scary to watch but following common wisdom like putting a spoon in the person's mouth or blowing in their face doesn't help a seizure and can even cause inadvertent harm. Instead, the best thing to do is to turn the person on his/her side to let spit or vomit drain, and just wait for the seizure to stop." — [Amy Baxter, MD](#) , emergency pediatrician, founder and CEO of MMJ Labs LLC

Myth: You can tell a baby's gender based on his or her heart rate



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"Sorry moms, but babies' heart rates are affected by many different variables including the development of the sympathetic/parasympathetic systems as the fetus develops as well as many other non-developmental factors such as maternal fever and fetal movement among others." — *Jim Betoni, MD, maternal fetal medicine specialist and developer of The [Pregnancy Power App](#)*

Myth: If you have a period you can have a baby



iStock/matka_Wariatka

"Many women think they will be fertile until menopause, but this is wrong. As we age, our fertility decreases. A woman with a regular menstrual cycle can experience infertility due to the age of her eggs. "— *Jane L. Frederick, MD, reproductive endocrinologist and medical director at HRC Fertility.* (These are the [signs of infertility that every couple should know](#) .)

Myth: You can train your hair to need less washing



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"This is not how the scalp works. Oil glands in the scalp produce oils that need to be distributed along the hair shaft (aka, by brushing), and the excess must be washed out with an oil-dissolving cleanser. Oil build-up on the scalp can lead to scalp irritation, itching, pimples, and dandruff. You simply cannot train your scalp to stop producing oils and to require less frequent washing." — *Tsippora Shainhouse MD, FAAD, dermatologist and clinical instructor at the University of Southern California*

Myth: Poison ivy is contagious



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"Poison ivy sometimes appears to spread as it evolves over several days. But the only way to get poison ivy is to come in contact with the plant or the sap from the plant yourself. You cannot catch it from someone else." — *Todd Minars, MD, dermatologist in Hollywood, FL.* (Here's [how to ID—and avoid—poison ivy](#) in nature.)

Myth: Going gluten-free will help you lose weight



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"The only individuals who need to consume a gluten-free diet are those diagnosed with [celiac disease](#) . Dieters who follow a gluten-free meal plan inevitably lose weight because they are eliminating food from their diet, resulting in a reduced daily caloric intake." — *Suzanne Fisher MS, RD, LDN, nutrition consultant, Fisher Enterprises*

Myth: Sit up straight to avoid back problems



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"Your mom wasn't totally wrong; hunching can certainly be bad for your back. But the opposite is true too. Sitting up straight for too long without a break can also cause strain. If you work in an office setting, make sure your chair is at a height where your knees are at a 90 degree angle, your feet can rest flat on the floor, and you have proper lower back support. Make sure to stand up, stretch, and take a quick walk several times a day to keep from getting stiff or causing injury." [Neel Anand](#) , MD, *clinical professor of surgery and director of spine trauma at Cedars-Sinai Spine Center in Los Angeles*

Myth: If you've had the flu this season you won't get it again



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"Are you sure it was the flu and not some other virus? In addition, there are multiple strains of influenza circulating every year, getting one strain doesn't protect you from the others." — *Daniel McGee, MD, pediatrician at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital.* (Your best bet is to get a flu shot—here's [how to make it hurt less](#) .)

Myth: You need to rinse after you brush your teeth



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"Most toothpastes contains levels of fluoride that help reverse the early stages of tooth decay by remineralizing the tooth enamel. If you rinse with a mouthwash or water, you don't give the toothpaste enough time to work, so you don't get the full benefit. I see too many patients with this issue and they all look at me with a shocked face when I tell them

they've been doing things incorrectly almost all their life." — [Eugene Gamble](#) , *periodontal surgeon*. (Watch out for these other [common toothbrushing mistakes](#) .)

Myth: Carbs make you fat



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"Many people are avoiding carbs trying to lose weight, but carbs are part of a healthy diet and necessary, especially if you work out. It's the type of carbohydrate that is important. Whole grains such as oats, barley, whole wheat pasta, bread and brown rice, and beans and lentils, for example, supply a tremendous amount of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Not to mention that these types of carbs help decrease risk of heart disease, diabetes, some cancer, and metabolic syndrome. They also help maintain a healthy weight." — [Kim Melton](#) , *registered dietitian*

Myth: If you work out, you can eat whatever you want



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"When it comes to weight loss and maintenance, diet is king. Many people justify eating unhealthy foods because they've worked out that day. Unfortunately, most people (and exercise machines) overestimate the number of calories burned during a workout, which gives people a false sense of 'I can eat anything,' which can actually lead to weight gain. If you really want to lose weight, you need to take a good look at your diet and focus on filling up on nutrient dense foods; exercise alone won't do the trick." — *Tory Tedrow, RD, CNSC and Head of Nutrition for ContentChecked*

Myth: You can't get skin cancer if you have dark skin



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"Although people with darker skin may rarely burn, the sun's UV rays can still cause premature aging, skin cancer, and age spots. That's why it's important for people of all skin types and colors to use sunscreen." — *Anthony Youn, MD, plastic surgeon and author of The Age Fix*

Myth: Sit-ups are the key to a flat stomach



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"You can't 'spot train' to tone or burn excess fat off a specific area of your body. Crunches or ab work have not been shown to be effective in getting a flat stomach, but a comprehensive diet and exercise program will help you lose excess weight all over and then you'll see a flatter tummy." — [Jessica Arber](#) , *certified workplace wellness manager and personal trainer*. (Here's [how to flatten your belly without crunches](#) .)

Myth: Probiotic supplements will cure all your stomach woes



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"There's zero science to support many of the claims made by probiotic supplements. Patients would be better served simply eating fermented foods—yogurt, kefir, and kombucha—rather than buying these expensive, unregulated, and probably useless supplements." — [Neil Stollman](#) , *MD, gastroenterologist in the Bay Area, CA*. ([These foods are the best natural source of probiotics](#) .)

Myth: Addiction means you're weak, with no self control



iStock/Marjan_Apostolovic

"Addiction is a chronic brain disease. It has been acknowledged as such by the American Medical Association (AMA) and other medical organizations since 1987. The disease has nothing to do with morality or choice, but rather brain chemistry. Addiction creates changes in the brain that affect an individual's decision making and impulse control." — *Joseph Garbely, DO, medical director and vice president of medical services at Caron Treatment Centers*

Myth: Dental X-rays will give you cancer



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"You will not get cancer from dental X-rays or any medical X-ray. Standing outside in the sun for an hour exposes you to more radiation than you'd get from a full set of dental X-rays. And if I don't take an X-ray, I worry that I might miss something serious not visible to the eye." — *Gary Glassman, DDS*. (Here's [what your dentist wants you to know](#).)

Myth: Small meals throughout the day are better than three big meals



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"The most important factor to consider in your meals is not how many of them there are but how well you balance macronutrients at every meal. Ideally you need plant fibers, greater than 50 grams per day. That's more important than 'keeping your blood sugar consistent' with smaller meals. The primary goal is to keep the gut happy by providing it with macro-meals rich in plant fibers and healthy fats." — [Stella Metsovas](#) , *nutritionist and author of Wild Mediterranean*

Myth: Bar soap grows bacteria, liquid soaps are cleaner



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"People think bar soaps are dirty and fosters germs, but there are no reputable studies that say there's more bacteria growing on bars. However, there are some brands of soap that can be harmful to skin, if they contain harsh, aggressive cleansing ingredients that strip skin of natural oils and lipids. It's more important what is in the soap than what form it comes in." — *Terrence Keaney, MD, Dove expert dermatologist*

Myth: Eating sugary treats makes cancer grow



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"There is no evidence that eliminating sugar from one's diet will treat cancer, and there have been no studies showing that eating sugar will make cancer worse. Research has shown that cancer cells do consume more glucose (sugar), but this is not indicative of 'feeding' the cancer or causing the cancer to progress. All cells depend on glucose for energy, but giving more sugar or less sugar will not affect the rate of growth of the cancer cells. A high-sugar diet can contribute to weight gain, and obese patients do have an increased risk of developing certain cancers, but the sugar itself does not directly affect one's cancer risk." — *Shikha Jain, MD, hematologist and oncologist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital*

Myth: Foods eaten after 8pm turn directly into fat



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"This 'diet tip' isn't true; food eaten at night isn't metabolized any differently than food eaten earlier in the day. This is really just a way to get you to stop eating junk at night when willpower for the day has been depleted. But I actually recommend a healthy pre-bedtime snack for people trying to lose weight." — *Shawn M Talbott, PhD, CNS, a nutritional biochemist and author of [Best Future You](#)* . (Use these [healthy snack ideas](#) to eat smart before bed or anytime.)

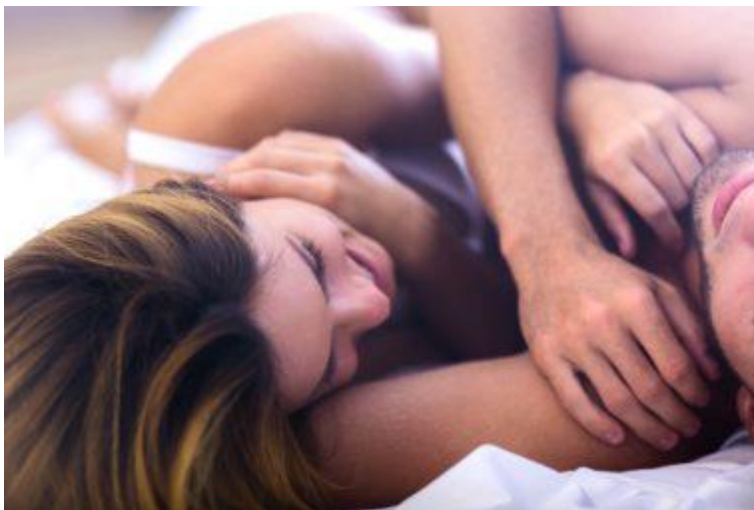
Myth: Medications belong in the bathroom medicine cabinet



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"It's common to store medications in a place that's convenient and that you visit many times a day. For many people, this is the bathroom. However, many medications can lose their strength and even break down when stored in a damp environment such as a bathroom or near a kitchen sink. It is therefore best to store your medications in a dry place, away from heat, direct light, or any source of dampness." — *Mary Jayne Kennedy, MD, department chair of clinical sciences in High Point University's Fred Wilson School of Pharmacy*

Myth: Oral and anal sex are safe alternatives to "regular sex"



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"Both oral and anal sexual practices are risky behaviors for several reasons. The human papilloma virus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted infection, is spread

through semen. HPV is known to cause cancer of the cervix and penis, but it also can cause cancer of the anus and the mouth and throat. Other sexually transmitted infections, such as gonorrhea, can also occur in the mouth and throat. In addition, repetitive anal sex can harm the muscles that help control defecation, causing a condition called anal prolapse, where part of the rectum sticks out of the body." — *Elyse Watkins, MD, Assistant Professor of Physician Assistant Studies at High Point University.* ([STDs are at a record high—here's why you may be at risk](#) .)

Myth: Running is bad for your knees



iStock/Georgijevic

"There is plenty of scientific research which has found that recreational runners are not at increased risk of having symptoms of knee arthritis or other orthopedic problems. In fact, running may strengthen muscles that stabilize the knee, which may help prevent injuries and arthritis." — *James Smoliga, MD, associate professor of physiology in the Congdon School of Health Sciences at High Point University.*

Myth: Children are the best sleepers



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"You've heard the expression 'sleeping like a baby' as the epitome of peaceful slumber, but children have several unique challenges when it comes to breathing during sleep. Growing bodies often haven't caught up with large tonsils and tongues, which can cause breathing difficulty at night. Things like diet, use of sippy cups, length of breastfeeding, and allergies can also impact the child's sleep quality." — *Mark Burhenne, MD, DDS, author of [The 8-Hour Sleep Paradox](#)*

Myth: Chocolate is a health food



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"While eating a square of dark chocolate does provide antioxidant benefits, the detrimental effects [from large portions] can far outweigh the benefits. Unfortunately, it is one of those feel-good foods that tends to get overeaten. Since it's high in fat and sugar, chocolate can be the perfect storm for weight gain. If you want to get the benefits of the antioxidants (and the taste!) without hurting your weight-loss efforts, keep it to one

square a day and look for dark chocolate that is comprised of at least 70 percent cocoa solids." — [Robert Ziltzer](#) , MD, FACP, FAAP obesity medicine specialist at the Scottsdale Weight Loss Center

Myth: High heels wreck your feet



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" [Wearing high heels constantly](#) can shorten your Achilles tendon, causing pain and injury. But just because a shoe is flat does not mean it will not irritate your feet. And no shoe can prevent or cause bunions as they are mainly hereditary. It's best to vary your heel heights and shoe type throughout the week. And if they hurt, take them off!" — *Joan Oloff, MD, podiatrist and shoe designer.* (These are the [shoe mistakes that are killing your feet](#) .)

Myth: If you don't work out, your muscle will turn into fat



iStock/g-stockstudio

"Many people believe that if they gain muscle from working out, but then stop working out, that the muscle turns into fat. Muscle and fat are two very different tissues made up of very different types of cells, just like bone and skin are two very different tissues. When muscular people get out of shape, they often gain some excess fat, and because of the extra fat over the muscle, an out-of-shape muscular person looks less toned, and it looks like the muscle has turned into fat, but it really has not." — *James Smoliga, MD, associate professor of physiology in the Congdon School of Health Sciences at High Point University*

Myth: Juice is a healthy alternative to soda



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"Whole fruits and vegetables are very good for you, but the problem with fruit juice is that it's high in sugar and lacking in fiber, leaving you with a rapid rise in insulin. Sugar then gets pumped into fat cells and ultimately converted to fat. The ingestion of juice also increases food intake. Water, on the other hand reduces food intake. Instead of swapping soda for juice, stick with calorie-free drinks such as water, black tea, or coffee." — *Robert Ziltzer, MD, FACP, FAAP obesity medicine specialist at the Scottsdale Weight Loss Center. (These [genius tricks will help you drink more water](#) .)*

Myth: You should exfoliate before shaving



iStock/gilaxia

"I am more passionate about the benefits and virtues of exfoliation than anyone you have ever met, but I can't say this enough: Do *not* exfoliate before shaving. It can lead to increased irritation. And do not shave after exfoliating. Shaving is a good technique of exfoliation, so any additional exfoliation will only lead to irritation." — [Neal Schultz](#) , MD, NYC dermatologist, founder of DermTv.com and creator of BeautyRx. (Watch out for these common [leg-shaving mistakes](#) .)

Myth: No pain, no gain



iStock/sawaddee3002

"There may be parts of your life where this applies (though I can't think of any), but it is definitely not true for your body. Pain is a signal that something is wrong. Especially when you're trying to recover from an injury or disability, you should not suffer through additional pain. Of course, we like to differentiate 'good pain' from 'bad pain.' Getting

normal exercise soreness is fine but having an increase in pain or new, sharp, severe pains is not part of the process of getting healthier." — *Matt Likins, PT, OCS , physical therapist and founding partner 1st Choice Physical Therapy in Metro Detroit*

Myth: Eggs are bad for your heart



iStock/denizya

"In previous years we were led to believe that the dietary cholesterol in egg yolks would raise our blood cholesterol, leading to heart disease. But more than 40 years of research has shown that healthy adults can enjoy eggs without significantly impacting their risk. In fact, eggs contain nutrients that may help lower our risk of heart disease. This nutrient-dense food contains six grams of high-quality protein, all nine essential amino acids, choline, selenium, vitamin B12, vitamin D, phosphorus, riboflavin, and folate. Eggs absolutely can be part of a healthy diet." — *Kathy Siegel, MS, RDN Registered Dietitians and Nutrition Consultant at [Triad to Wellness](#) . ([These foods can lower cholesterol](#) .)*

Myth: Arthritis is just a part of getting old and creaky



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"Arthritis is not just a disease of the elderly. Many types of arthritis occur in younger individuals, including infants. An example might be juvenile rheumatoid arthritis or neonatal lupus. And there are [many things you can do now to prevent or lessen arthritis before it gets bad](#) . Do not accept it as an inevitability of aging." — *Nathan Wei, MD, Clinical Director of the Arthritis Treatment Center in Frederick, MD*

Myth: You shouldn't salt your food



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" [High sodium](#) can contribute to high blood pressure, but it's not because of sprinkling table salt on foods. Only 5 percent of the sodium in the American diet comes from salt added at the table, and 5 percent comes from salt added during cooking. The majority of hidden sodium comes from packaged and processed foods and dining out. Other big

offenders are condiments and flavor enhancers such as ketchup, mustard, and soy sauce that are packed with salt. Over time, high blood pressure can cause heart disease, stroke and kidney failure." — *Dara Huang, MD, nephrologist and Founder of [New York Culinary Medicine](#)*

Myth: Mentally ill people are all dangerous



iStock/KatarzynaBialasiewicz

"First of all, there is no such thing as 'the mentally ill' as one group of people. That would be like referring to everyone with cancer as 'the cancerous.' Also people are people first, and a diagnosis much later. According to ample research, someone with a mental illness is far (far, far) more likely to be a victim of violence than they ever are to be violent themselves. Even if they are, they are much more likely to be violent toward themselves (through self harm and suicide) than toward anyone else." — *[Mark Henick](#) , MS, mental health advocate and speaker*

Myth: Depression is incurable



iStock/KatarzynaBialasiewicz

"Recovery from the vast majority of mental health problems, including depression, is not only possible, it's actually likely and expected when people receive the specific kind and amount of help that they need. This is true even in many seemingly chronic, severe, intractable situations. When you combine medication with psychological therapy as well as social supports like housing, employment, and community engagement, that's the gold standard for recovery." — [Mark Henick](#) , MS, *mental health advocate and speaker*.
(Here's [what psychologists wish you knew about depression](#) .)