

FOOD MYTH BUSTERS

THERE ARE MANY MYTHS AND LEGENDS ON THE INTERNET REGARDING FOOD, NUTRITION AND HAVING A STOMA. HERE WE WILL TRY TO SET SOME OF THOSE STRAIGHT.

MYTH People say I am lucky to be thin

TRUTH Weight changes reflect your nutritional status. Weight loss can be a side effect of an active disease, for example IBD, or from chemotherapy or from scar tissue in the small bowel due to conditions like Crohn's. Weight loss can lead to malnutrition, so it is important to talk to your GP if you are losing weight without actively trying.

MYTH Why eat healthy? Just take a supplement

TRUTH Supplements do not have the beneficial properties that help prevent or protect from disease, for example antioxidants, and so cannot fully replace fruit and vegetables. The majority of people with a stoma should not need to take any vitamin or mineral supplements.

MYTH Losing weight? Just eat more

TRUTH This can be difficult for a number of reasons; for example disease activity, malabsorption or if you have a history of obstructions due to adhesions. Your GP can refer you to a specialist dietician for advice on how to put on weight safely.

MYTH Spicy foods should be avoided

TRUTH There is no truth to this. Spices can be important for taste, quality of life and cultural cooking preferences. In addition, Turmeric is a good natural anti-inflammatory.

MYTH I will never be able to eat raw vegetables / salad

TRUTH Restrictions on eating raw vegetables and salad are not usually necessary. You may be advised to avoid fibre in the initial post-op period if you are experiencing a flare up of your IBD, or if you are experiencing episodes of partial obstruction.

MYTH I avoid dairy... just incase

TRUTH Lactose avoidance may be useful if you have had multiple bowel re-sections, suffer from short bowel syndrome or a lactose deficiency. Lactose-free dairy alternatives are readily available and dairy has great benefits for bone health. Dairy avoidance should be less of a concern with an ileostomy as any undigested lactose will enter the ileostomy bag and not the colon - where most intolerance problems are manifested.

MYTH Toilet location and menu choices become a reason not to go out and enjoy a meal

TRUTH Many restaurants now cater for specialised dietary requirements. However needing a special diet can lead to feelings of isolation and these feelings can be overcome through:

- Normalised bowel function
- Management of any intolerance symptoms
- Improved hydration
- Improved nutritional status
- Normalised diet and improved relationship with food

MYTH I was told this diet will help my disease

TRUTH You should not exclude food or food groups from your diet unless advised to by a medical professional. Often fad diets or elimination of food stuffs are unrealistic or difficult to maintain. Proper alternatives should be found for excluded foods, and any diet should be honestly assessed for actual benefits over a set period of time.



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