

# Destructive Dieting

Recent studies have shed a light on misconceptions about the beneficial effects of different diets

Low-fat diets cause more weight loss than their low-carbohydrate counterparts

Low-fat, high sugar diet products increase fat generation

Low-sodium diets fail to lower blood pressure



By Sonny Mulpuri & Billy Moin  
EDITOR & SENIOR ASSISTANT EDITOR

Every five years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture publishes Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The guide emphasizes healthy eating habits and aims to reduce chronic health issues, which afflict about half of the population.

The department’s website offers tips for eating healthy, including advice on sodium, fat and other food components that are commonly asked about. One of the recommendations is that anyone 14 years old or older should cap their sodium intake at 2.3 grams each day in order to maintain a low blood pressure.

However, Boston University School of Medicine professor Lynn Moore and a groups of researchers recently concluded a 16-year-long study that debunked such notions about the dangers of sodium. Moore’s group tracked the relationship between blood pressure and sodium intake in 2,600 men and women. Results showed that people who consume less than 2.5 grams each day actually had higher blood pressure than their counterparts.

Moore’s study also found that people with higher and lower sodium intakes than the average American put themselves at higher risk of heart disease. The scientists noted that higher intakes of other nutrients, such as calcium, potassium and magnesium, could be linked to lower long-term blood pressure as well.

A similar study conducted by the worldwide Public Health Research Institute in 2016 supported the results of Moore’s study. After using a pool of 130,000 people, PHRI’s study found a correlation between low sodium consumption (3 grams or less daily) and higher risk for heart disease and mortality. The general understanding about the effect of sodium on the human body is starting to be disproved, but that isn’t the only notion that is starting to lose credibility.

Researchers at the University of Georgia studied the different effects of low-fat, high-sugar; high-fat, high-sugar and balanced diets. They noticed that the low-fat and high-sugar diet led to about twice as much fat generation as the balanced ones, despite containing about the same number of calories. The low-fat diet

was designed to mimic typical diet products, leading researchers to conclude that diet foods may actually lead to weight gain.

However, low-fat diets result in more fat loss than low-carb diets in humans, according to ScienceDaily. Reducing fat intake leads to overall weight loss while carb reduction leads to more fat burning. Given this data, the scientists involved in the study want to conduct more research to see exactly how the brain functions and how the body responds while maintaining both diets. This will give a better understanding of which diet impacts what.

On the other hand, low-carb diets can also have their benefits. They can be healthier for the heart in the sense that the proteins and fats that are being consumed are of the healthy kind, like those found in fruits and vegetables. This is one advantage that animal-based fats and proteins can’t provide. According to Harvard School of Public Health, one study tested different low-carb diets against each other and found that diets filled with vegetable fats and proteins led to 30 percent lowered risk of heart disease and 20 percent lowered risk of Type 2 Diabetes.

As more options for healthier alternatives are being churned out each year, consumers start to develop a mindset that new products are always more beneficial to health. In some situations, that isn’t the case. A UNC-Chapel Hill study found that low- and reduced-foods sound healthier to consumers, but that’s not necessarily true. Because the healthier alternative labels only refer to one specific nutrient, others could make the product just as unhealthy as before, if not worse. For example, the study pointed out that certain reduced-fat chocolate milk products contain more sugar than the usual products, making them no better than their standard counterparts.

As previous conceptions about what constitutes a healthy diet were proved false, consumers should be weary of such information. Having a good grasp on what the better options are can contribute to maintaining a proper and healthy lifestyle.

“Diets filled with vegetable fats and proteins led to 30 percent lowered risk of heart disease.”



# Behind the BEVERAGE



*Studies prove that caffeine intake impacts overall health.*

## 1 Caffeine impacts behavior

Caffeine is a stimulant, meaning adolescents can experience side effects such as irritability, restlessness, difficulty concentrating and sleepiness.

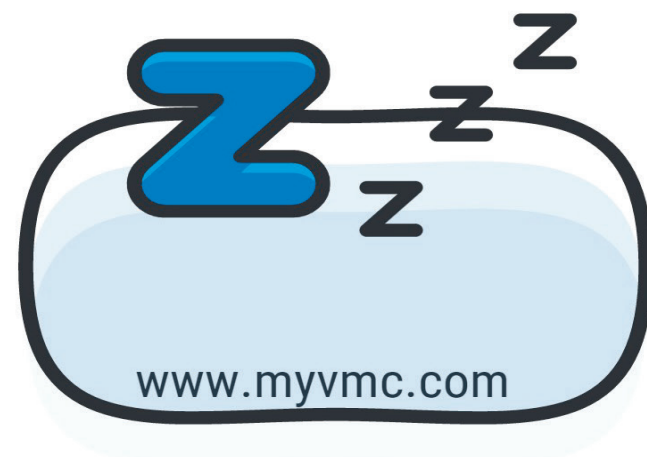


## 2 Caffeine affects health

Consumption of caffeine may lead to dehydration and dental problems if the drink also contains large quantities of sugar.

## 3 Caffeine leads to sleep deprivation

Adolescents who consume more than 50mg of caffeine per day experience irregular sleep patterns and drowsiness throughout the day.



# Caffeine intake in the UNITED STATES

According to the FDA, 85 percent of Americans consume at least one caffeinated beverage a day.

**55%**  
Sodas

According to the Virtual Medical Centre, adolescents receive their daily caffeine intake from beverages and other caffeinated infused medicines and foods.

**90%**  
18 and older

**45%**  
10-16 years

**20%**  
0-5 years

www.FDA.gov

**30%**  
Teas/coffee

**1%**  
Other