

FOOD MYTHS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I've heard that eating late at night makes you more likely to put weight on. Is this true?

This is a common belief but there is little evidence that eating late causes weight gain. What matters is the total number of calories you eat over the day, balanced with how many calories you use up with physical activity. Dieticians recommend spreading your food intake out over the day with three meals. The exact timing of meals will depend on your lifestyle. Eating late can lead to heartburn in some people so if this affects you it might be worth trying to eat earlier.

Will I lose more weight if I swap from butter to margarine?

No. Butter and margarine have the same amount of calories in them. You could try a reduced fat spread or cut down on the amount of butter or margarine you eat which will reduce your calorie intake. Rapeseed and olive oil margarines do have a type of fat (monounsaturated) that is healthier for your heart even though it won't help with weight loss.

I know I should try to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables each day but what is a portion?

This is a question dieticians often get asked. A portion is one medium fruit such as an apple or pear, one handful of small fruit such as grapes, two plums or satsumas, three heaped tablespoons of vegetables or a cereal bowl of salad. For more information on fruit and vegetable portions see www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday

How much weight should I aim to lose each week?

We would recommend a healthy weight loss of 0.5 – 1kg per week. Some people lose more than this in the first few weeks as they are losing fluid (water) as well as fat. This is normal. A good aim is to try and lose five per cent of your weight in three months and ten per cent in six months. For someone who weighs 120kg this would mean losing 6kg in three months and 12kg in six months.

I am on tablets that stop me losing weight. What can I do?

Some tablets can make weight loss more difficult, but they will not stop you losing weight altogether. Tablets that affect weight often cause an increase in appetite and hunger. To continue losing weight you can try eating regular healthy meals, filling up on high-water, low-calorie foods such as vegetables and salad and drinking water before eating to reduce your appetite.