

# 50 food facts

As part of our special 50th anniversary issue, we bring you 50 of the best, unusual or plain bizarre nutrition facts



## Cooking and food preparation

- 1 Steaming and poaching vegetables will retain more nutrients than boiling.<sup>2</sup>
- 2 Leaving the skins on potatoes and boiling in only enough water to cover them, and cooking for the minimum time (particularly peeled potatoes) minimises the fibre and vitamins lost.<sup>1</sup>
- 3 Fruit and vegetables should be washed thoroughly prior to eating to remove any remaining soil that may potentially carry harmful bacteria, including E.coli.<sup>4</sup>



## Dietary information

- 4 One gram of fat provides nine calories, which is more than double the calorie content in the same amount of protein or carbohydrates.<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Low or no-fat alternatives are not always a healthier option, as a low-fat fruit yoghurt can sometimes contain eight teaspoons of added sugar.<sup>5</sup>
- 6 No more than six grams of salt should be consumed a day.<sup>5</sup> Up to 75 per cent of salt we consume daily is already in foods, such as bread, cereal and ready meals.<sup>1</sup>
- 7 More than 15g of sugar per 100g means that the food is considered high in sugar.<sup>1</sup>
- 8 High fat foods are categorised as more than 20 grams of total fat per 100g, and low-fat foods, less than three grams.<sup>1</sup>
- 9 Almost all fruit and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, dried, chilled, canned, pure juices and smoothies, count towards the recommended five a day, excluding potatoes and other related vegetables.<sup>1</sup>
- 10 Fruit juice and dried fruit only count as one towards the five a day, regardless of how much is consumed.<sup>1</sup>



## Drinks

- 11 If you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated.<sup>5</sup>
- 12 Drinking with food dilutes the digestive enzymes in your saliva.<sup>5</sup>
- 13 While it is possible to exist without food for approximately five weeks, it is not possible to survive without water for longer than five days.<sup>3</sup>
- 14 Approximately three cups of coffee (for a 60kg person) can cause temporary behavioural changes in some people, such as increased arousal, irritability, nervousness or anxiety.<sup>6</sup>
- 15 Drinking six to eight 200ml glasses of fluid in addition to that gained from food every day maintains hydration levels.<sup>1,7</sup>

## Health

- 16 A high acid diet (for example, meat, cheese) depletes the bones and teeth of calcium, increasing the risk of osteoporosis.<sup>5</sup>
- 17 The most common types of food intolerances are wheat, gluten, milk and lactose, food preservatives, and foods such as wine and chocolate.<sup>4</sup>
- 18 Nearly four out of 10 men and one in three women in the UK are overweight.<sup>1</sup>
- 19 Obesity is associated with 9,000 premature deaths every year and, on average, reduces life expectancy by nine years.<sup>1</sup>
- 20 People with cancer can benefit from an anti-inflammatory diet to help prevent and reduce inflammation associated with cancer and treatments, particularly plant-based foods such as fruit and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and starchy carbohydrates.<sup>8</sup>
- 21 The body is 60 per cent protein and when these proteins react with excess sugar, it ends up causing skin cells to lose their elasticity; they become hardened and can stop functioning properly, making the body and skin age faster.<sup>9</sup>
- 22 Omega 3 fatty acids help to control inflammation, one of the causes of skin ageing and wrinkling.<sup>9</sup>



## Pregnancy and babies

- 23 Although pregnant women often find themselves more hungry than usual, they do not need to 'eat for two' even when expecting twins or triplets.<sup>1</sup>
- 24 Peanuts are no longer considered a food to avoid during pregnancy or breastfeeding, unless the mother has a peanut allergy or is advised to by a healthcare professional.<sup>1,4</sup>
- 25 Pregnant women should not eat more than two portions of oily fish a week, such as fresh tuna, salmon, sardines, mackerel and trout, and should avoid fish that contains high levels of mercury, as this can damage the baby's developing nervous system.<sup>1</sup>
- 26 Pregnant women are advised to take a vitamin D supplement and folic acid, but to avoid vitamin A supplements as too much can be potentially harmful to the baby.<sup>1</sup>
- 27 Babies under one year old need less than one gram of salt a day, as their kidneys are unable to cope with more than this amount.<sup>1</sup>



## 2003

Skills for Health, the sector skills council for health, develops National Occupational Standards (NOS) for acupuncture, reiki, Alexander technique and healing. NOS for other complementary therapies follow, including aromatherapy, homeopathy, cranial therapy, massage, nutritional therapy, naturopathy, reflexology and shiatsu.



## 2004

An earthquake off the west coast of Indonesia triggers a tsunami that claims the lives of more than 220,000 people across 14 countries. Many FHT members raise funds for relief work and offer their services to those affected.



**37** On the whole it is better to take supplements with food so that they are digested at the same time as the meal, and absorbed and utilised to better effect.<sup>11</sup>

**38** Anybody who is taking a blood thinner such as heparin or warfarin should not be taking Omega 3 or vitamin E supplements because of the potential to thin the blood too much.<sup>11</sup>



**Eating patterns**

**39** Eating every three to four hours is ideal for keeping blood sugar levels stable, for example three regular nourishing meals and two nutritious snacks.<sup>7</sup>

**40** Missing breakfast can affect concentration levels, as the brain needs the glucose often found in bread and cereals for concentrating.<sup>2</sup>

**41** Eating on the move means that the body cannot digest the food properly, affecting the amount of nutrients absorbed.<sup>12</sup>

**42** Mint aids digestion, which is why it is commonly consumed after a meal.<sup>5</sup>



**Weight loss**

**43** It takes 20 minutes for the brain to register a sense of being full.<sup>5</sup>

**44** In general, you need to cut back on 500 calories below your body's energy requirements every day to lose one pound a week.<sup>2</sup>

**45** Twenty-five per cent of rapid weight loss often consists of water, muscle and other lean tissue, as the body is designed to hold on to its fat reserves.<sup>5</sup>

**46** It is physically impossible to lose more than two pounds of body fat in a week.<sup>5</sup>



**Sport and exercise**

**47** Ideally, sportspeople should eat between two and four hours before training<sup>13</sup> and within one hour following exercise.<sup>5,13</sup>

**48** If fat loss is the goal, exercising first thing in the morning on an empty stomach may increase fat loss as the body is encouraged to burn slightly more fat for fuel.<sup>13</sup>

**49** Drinking water is sufficient during exercise lasting less than an hour, but for moderate to high intensity exercise over an hour, a sports drink may help delay fatigue and increase performance.<sup>13</sup>

**50** Low intakes of zinc and iron may slow sport injury recovery, as zinc is needed for the manufacture of body proteins as well as for cell division for formation of new tissue, while iron is needed for collagen synthesis.<sup>14</sup>

**References**

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\*The NHS defines 'regularly' as drinking this amount every day or most days of the week.

**Alcohol**

**28** Women are more sensitive than men to alcohol because they have a lower average total body water content (52 per cent to 62 per cent) and are therefore not able to dilute alcohol as well.<sup>1</sup>

**29** Fresh air, coffee, or a cold shower will not sober someone up; it is only time that will remove alcohol from the body (approximately one hour per unit).<sup>1</sup>

**30** Men should not regularly\* drink more than three to four units of alcohol a day, and women more than two to three units. A 175ml glass of wine contains 2.1 units; a pint of beer, three units; a single 25ml shot of spirits, one unit.<sup>1</sup>

**31** Alcohol contains nearly as many calories as dietary fat (seven calories to nine calories per gram).<sup>2</sup>



**Vitamins, minerals and supplements**

**32** White spots on the nails can indicate a zinc deficiency.<sup>5</sup>

**33** Smoking depletes all the B vitamins and also vitamin C.<sup>5</sup>

**34** The contraceptive pill depletes the B vitamins, including folic acid and also zinc.<sup>5</sup>

**35** Up to a quarter of people in the UK have low levels of vitamin D, which can increase the risk of associated health problems, including rickets in children and osteomalacia (soft bones) in adults.<sup>10</sup>

**36** For maximum absorption, mineral supplements such as calcium should be in their organic form, for example citrates and ascorbates, rather than inorganic, such as chlorides, sulphates, carbonates and oxides.<sup>11</sup>



**2004**

Get Well UK, a not-for-profit company, is founded by Boo Armstrong with the aim of making complementary healthcare available to everyone in Britain, via the National Health Service.



**2005**

The FHT accreditation scheme is launched, to approve therapy qualifications offered by colleges and training centres that are not otherwise validated by an external awarding body, regulated by Ofqual. The scheme is extended in 2008 to cover short courses.

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