



NEWS RELEASE

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Common misconceptions about nutrition

By Chris Halagarda,

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FORT LEE, Va. – Having counseled and trained many athletes, health enthusiasts and aspiring health enthusiasts over the years, I’ve noticed that there are many reoccurring misconceptions about nutrition. Here are just a few of the more common ones:

1. A supplement must be safe if it’s all natural

Many supplement companies try to prey on the public’s naivety by claiming that their product is natural, therefore, it must be safe and effective. This message assumes that there is nothing harmful in nature, right? Not true! Marijuana, cocaine, penicillin, ephedrine, tobacco and many other powerful supplements, drugs, and medications are “all natural” yet we know how powerful they are.

Don’t be confused by the good advice to eat foods in their most “natural” state. Continue to eat natural foods such as fruit over processed fruit roll-ups. Just don’t be fooled into thinking that consuming “natural” supplements is risk-free. Better yet, instead of spending your hard-earned money on unproven and potentially dangerous supplements, go to the commissary regularly to stock up on a variety of fruit and vegetables. They are the most natural and powerful foods on earth. It’s a great month to stock up, too. September is a good harvesting month for farmers and it’s National Fruit and Vegetable Month.

2. Nuts are fattening

This statement is nuts! The truth is nuts are some of the healthiest foods in the world. You can buy nuts with all the nutrients that have been shown to improve our health at your commissary while saving money at the same time. The “grocery list” of nutrients in nuts includes amino acids (the building blocks of protein), complex carbohydrates, fiber, dozens of vitamins and minerals and fats, but the healthy kind of fats. Nuts have mono- and poly-unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats or trans fats. Saturated fat and trans fat promote clogging of the arteries and are a main reason why heart disease is the No. 1 killer in the United States. Substituting saturated fat with a healthy alternative such as mono- and poly-unsaturated fats can help lower your risk of developing heart disease.

The only warning with regard to nuts is that more is not better. Nuts are calorically dense, just like butter and oil. So an ounce or two of nuts a day is all that you need. Sprinkle some almonds or sunflower seeds on a salad, add sliced walnuts to vegetables, spread a tablespoon of peanut butter on an apple or pear, blend some peanut butter or whole peanuts into a shake, or add a scoop of peanut butter or whole nuts into your morning oatmeal. Don't limit yourself to peanut butter either. Try different types of nut butters such as almond, macadamia, pecan, pistachio and sunflower, or try making your own mixed nut butter by mixing nuts and oil in a blender.

3. Drinking water promotes weight loss

Unfortunately, water does not accelerate weight loss. There may be a small amount of calories burned when extremely cold water is consumed, because the body will burn a small amount of calories to warm it to body temperature, but not a significant amount. Most of us also know that it is important to stay well hydrated because when we are dehydrated we are weaker and slower and less efficient at breathing. So, if we are dehydrated while exercising we will exercise more slowly and will burn fewer calories during a workout. Water may also provide a feeling of satiety or fullness when we eat a small meal. This could add up to weight loss over time. There is also some thought that when we lose fat successfully, our adipose tissue (fat cells) shrinks and releases toxins. Being adequately hydrated is important for flushing these toxins out of the body through the kidneys. So be sure to drink regularly for many different reasons, but don't expect drinking water to lead to a shrinking waist.

To ensure you're adequately hydrated, monitor your urine color. This is a method used by firefighters after returning from a fire and many active-duty personnel during military exercises. It's also a good habit to weigh yourself before and after a workout. Drink about

16-24 ounces of fluid for every pound lost during your workout. The weight lost during a workout is water in sweat, not fat.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on www.twitter.com and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*