Can you be fit and fat? Does skipping breakfast promote weight loss? Should overweight children be on restrictive diets?

These are just a few of the many misconceptions about weight that are not necessarily true. Here are my top weight loss myths – busted!

**Fit and Fat?**

Yes, you can be fit and overweight within reason. The trick is to control your weight so you can be physically active.

There are plenty of people who get regular physical activity, yet they are overweight. A recent study showed people who are fit and carrying extra pounds may not be at increased risk of developing or dying from heart disease or cancer when compared to people of healthy weight.¹

Likewise, thin people are not necessarily healthy if they carry excess belly fat.

What matters more than weight is the amount and type of body fat. Studies show that fat around the midsection or belly fat may be more harmful than fat elsewhere on the body.² Why? Belly or visceral fat embedded into muscles and around vital organs can have a metabolic impact compared to subcutaneous fat, which is the type of fat that simply sits beneath the skin like on your hips. Abdominal fat is also a predictor of risk for obesity-related diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Generally ladies should strive for a waist circumference below 35 inches and men, 40 inches according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

**Eat Whatever You Want As Long As You Exercise**

It might sound logical that if you work out, you can eat whatever you want, but this is usually not the most effective way to lose weight. Believe it or not, it is easier not to eat the chocolate cake than it is to burn it off. One slice of decadent chocolate cake could contain as many as 500 calories and require up to five miles of jogging to burn it off.

Losing weight occurs when you create a calorie deficit either by eating fewer calories, burning calories through exercise or a combination of both. Diet plans that include cutting calories and regular physical activity tend to be the most successful and sustainable.

Further, the quality of the food you consume and regular physical activity are important to overall health, regardless of weight.

So the next time you want to indulge in a calorie-rich food or beverage, enjoy a smaller portion and account for it in your daily calorie budget.
Health Only Improves When You Lose Lots of Weight

Seeking to reach your healthy weight is an excellent goal in support of good health. However, you may benefit from losing as little as 5-10 percent of your body weight. Studies show that even small amounts of weight loss may improve blood cholesterol levels, blood sugar levels, blood pressure and lower risk for heart disease.

Celebrate small victories on your journey toward a healthier weight. The payoff – people who lose weight slowly are more likely to keep it off.

Skipping Breakfast Slashes Calories

Studies show that breakfast eaters have healthier weights compared to breakfast skippers. Skipping breakfast or any meal usually results in overeating later in the day.

Enjoying a nutritious meal in the morning sets the stage for the day. A breakfast that contains protein and fiber may keep blood sugar levels stable and hunger at bay until lunchtime. Your blood sugar and energy levels are low when you wake up in the morning. To get your body moving and energized after a long night’s rest, you need fuel in the form of a healthy breakfast.

Another benefit, people who eat breakfast tend to have healthier diets overall, ones that are higher in nutrients.

Breakfast may help you keep the weight off. We have learned from successful losers, the National Weight Control Registry of those who have lost weight and kept it off, make eating breakfast a daily habit.

Reconsider where you slash calories in your diet and keep in mind you may save calories if you start your day the healthy way with a nutritious and delicious breakfast.

Restrictive Diets for Children

Many of our nation’s children are overweight or obese. But putting kids on a diet to shed weight may not be the right approach. Kids may outgrow their excess weight, especially during rapid growth periods like puberty. As kids grow, the ratio of height to weight that is used in the body mass index (BMI) formula can change and put your child into a healthy weight range.

A tip to parents is to set a good example, stock the home with lots of delicious foods, including a few treats and encourage right sized portions and regular physical activity.