



There's no need for the big gulp.

Most of the time, nutritionists and dietitians are full of brilliant ideas that help you eat healthier, stay slimmer, and live longer. But every once in a while, food gurus forget that the rest of us have limited time, funds, and willpower. That's when they spit out wonky bits of wisdom like "Ask your waiter to wrap half your entrée before you start eating." Yeah, he'd be happy to—right after he sticks his thumb in your *salade Niçoise*. We collected seven of the hardest-to-swallow expert suggestions and replaced them with equally healthy tips that a normal person can actually use. Because unless your name is Jessica Seinfeld, you're not going to spend every second fretting about what goes on your plate.

The advice Chug eight glasses of water a day.

Why it's useless Peeing every 20 minutes seriously interferes with life.

The real deal Believe it or not, the eight-glass quota isn't etched in stone. Yes, we need to be well-hydrated, but if your urine is clear or close to it, you're probably getting enough fluids. If your No. 1 is neon yellow, lighten things up by adding one or two glasses a day. Once your body adjusts to getting more fluid (and you don't have to run to the can every 10 minutes), add another, says Karen Benzinger, R.D., a dietary consultant in Chicago who specializes in health care. And don't forget that all liquids—including tea, juice, even the tonic in your vodka drink—help keep your body sufficiently saturated.

The advice Don't drink juice—it's a sugar bomb.

Why it's useless Juice is a breakfast staple, and it's essential for smoothies.

The real deal There's a big difference between 100 percent juice and a bottle

useless advice

They say you should banish late-night meals, slave over old-fashioned oatmeal, and stop after one bite of dessert. Obviously, "they" don't live in the real world

By Kate Ashford Carpenter Photograph by Hunter Freeman

of sugar water with a few cranberries squeezed into it. Yes, juice has a lot of the sweet stuff, but a six-ounce glass of 100 percent juice also counts as a full serving of fruit and delivers many of the same vitamins and antioxidants, making it worth the occasional sugar rush, says Jessica Ganzer, R.D., owner of Ganzer Wellness Consulting in Arlington, Virginia. And it can be the easiest way to get a superfood: Drinking 100 percent pomegranate juice is easy; picking apart a real pomegranate, not so much. As long as you drink 100 percent juice (from concentrate is fine) and limit yourself to one six-to-eight ounce glass a day, you're not breaking any rules of good nutrition. If you're seriously cutting back on calories or carbs, try Tropicana's Light 'n Healthy line; a serving has about half the sugar (10 grams) and calories (50) of normal juice.

The advice Shut the kitchen down after 7 P.M. to prevent weight gain.

Why it's useless After a long day at the office and a trip to the gym, you either eat dinner at 9:30 or starve.

The real deal The no-food-right-before-bed rule was meant for the nighttime nosher who mindlessly wolfs down a bag of Oreos while watching *CSI: Miami*. If you get home long after dark, a late dinner is perfectly fine. A calorie is a calorie, no matter what time you eat it, according to Katie Clark, R.D., M.P.H., assistant professor of family health care nursing at the University of California, San Francisco. But do keep your evening meal light—along the lines of a chicken breast, steamed broccoli, and brown rice. Too much chow will keep you up at night: To break down all that food, your gut has to churn like a cement truck.

The advice Simmer steel-cut oatmeal instead of nuking the instant kind.

Why it's useless The only way we have time for breakfast is if making breakfast doesn't take any time.

The real deal The pros push this tip because people usually eat flavored instant oatmeal, which comes with up to a whopping 13 grams of sugar per 43-gram packet—compared with one gram or less of sweetness in the steel-cut stuff. And steel-cut oats are less processed than the rolled oats used in the just-add-water variety, so they take longer to digest (this keeps your blood sugar nice and steady, helping you avoid mood swings and hunger pangs). That said, instant oatmeal still uses whole grain oats (they're just mashed a bit more), so it comes with most of the same health benefits. One of these is the

cholesterol-lowering, hunger-satisfying soluble fiber beta-glucan: It turns gummy when it hits your GI tract, binds with cholesterol, and drags it out. "I'd rather my clients eat one-minute oatmeal than no oatmeal at all," Ganzer says. If you find unsweetened oatmeal about as appetizing as paste, combine half a packet of the flavored kind with half a packet of plain. Or consider Quaker Oatmeal's Weight Control flavored instants, which pack even more fiber than steel-cut oats (six grams per packet) and keep sugar down to one gram.

The advice If you must drink while you diet, order a white-wine spritzer.

Why it's useless Despite the dainty name, it tastes just like what it is: watered-down wine.

The real deal There's no weight-loss magic in a spritzer, a cup of wine diluted



ROTTEN NUGGETS

Bum nutrition advice has been around forever

129–216 Greek physician Galen of Pergamum decreed that people should avoid fresh fruit. Why? In his youth, Galen suffered serious fevers until his father warned him to cut back on fruit, after which he almost never got overheated again.

1830 The influential minister Sylvester Graham of Connecticut used his pulpit to damn meat and sweets. Health and weight weren't his main concerns—

Sly thought the wrong foods (like a naughty teacake or a slice of "carnal" beef) stimulated desires for pleasures of the flesh.

1900 Impressed by Brits' reputation for stoicism, the Mexican government figured "Hey, it's gotta be the food" (never mind that this was during the "repress everything" Victorian era). Government officials told the Mexican people to stop using spicy chill peppers and even taught women

how to cook the bland British way.

1929 The "Guinness Is Good for You" slogan debuted. Beer-loving docs embraced it, in part because the dark stout was reported to be high in iron. Post-op patients, blood donors, pregnant women, and nursing moms even were told to pour themselves a

glass. The company eventually was ordered to stop the campaign. Update: While Guinness is unlikely to be revived as an iron source, University of Wisconsin researchers found that it may reduce clotting in narrowed arteries (which can lead to a heart attack).

—Kathleen Pennepacker



veggie sides instead of ordering fries. Also effective: putting your fork down between bites, which gives your stomach and brain time to register that you're full (which takes about 20 minutes). Once your gauge hits "F," ask the waiter to box up the rest of your food right away so you won't keep nibbling, Benzinger says.

The advice Have just one bite of dessert.

Why it's useless That's like telling an addict to have just a little crack.

The real deal Eating chocolate cake is like watching *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*: There's nothing right about it, so just revel in how deliciously wrong it is. A smarter strategy: Before you begin the debauchery, plan for the extra calories—skip the appetizer, the bread, or (ouch) the booze. "If the dessert is really that good, it's worth the sacrifice," Benzinger says. **WH**

with calorie-free carbonated water. It's just another portion-control trick that trims your total calorie intake, Clark says. If you balk at the idea of outdated cocktails or weak-tasting grape juice, slowly sipping a glass of water between

rounds of pinot grigio accomplishes the same goal.

The advice Put half your entrée in a to-go box before you start to eat.

Why it's useless You know you have portion-control

issues, but that doesn't mean you want everyone else at your table to know it too.

The real deal A better way to cut back on restaurant binging is to pretend the breadbasket is sprinkled with cyanide and to double up on



Our 100 calories make their 100 calories feel small.

100% whole grain • 0g trans fat per serving