5 Myths of Food Processing

MYTH #1

Fresh is best

FACT #1

- Frozen fruits and vegetables are packed at their nutritional peak and can retain more nutrients than fresh produce [1].
- Canned vegetables can contain more nutrients than raw vegetables, like canned tomatoes, which contain more lycopene and carotenoids than fresh tomatoes.

MYTH #2

Shop the perimeter of the supermarket for optimal nutrition

FACT #2

The perimeter of the supermarket has many nutritious foods, but interior aisles are also packed with nutritional gems like:

- Canned and dried beans
- Whole grains
- Pasta
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Hot and ready cereals

MYTH #3

Processed foods are nutritionally empty

FACT #3

Some foods that are classified as processed, like refined grains, contain essential nutrients. Without any grains in our diet, many Americans would fall short of nutrients like [2]:

- Folate
- Iron
- Fiber
- Magnesium

MYTH #4

You need to know how to cook to have a well-balanced diet

FACT #4

- Nutritious, affordable convenience foods can make meal prepping easier, such as jarred tomato sauce, grain mixes, rotisserie chicken, and more.
- Check out the nutrition label and ingredient list to ensure foods are providing nutrients without too much additional sodium or added sugars.

MYTH #5

A healthy dietary pattern is expensive

FACT #5

- There are many budget-friendly, nutritious foods, such as canned and frozen fruits and vegetables, pasta, cereal, eggs, yogurt, nuts, and canned and dried beans.
- Shopping from a list, planning meals in advance, and buying staples on sale can also make healthy eating more affordable.

References

1. Bouzari, Ali et al. “Vitamin retention in eight fruits and vegetables: a comparison of refrigerated and frozen storage.” Journal of agricultural and food chemistry vol. 63,3 (2015): 957-62. doi:10.1021/jf5058793

2. Papanikolaou, Yanni, and Victor L. Fulgoni. “The Role of Fortified and Enriched Refined Grains in the US Dietary Pattern: A NHANES 2009–2016 Modeling Analysis to Examine Nutrient Adequacy.” Frontiers in Nutrition, vol. 8, 6 Sept. 2021, doi:10.3389/fnut.2021.655464.