

## Myth 1

**Some people are just born fat.** Your genes may determine your height but it cannot determine your weight. Your weight is determined by your diet and lifestyle. Genes merely establish the amount you eat before you put on weight.

## Myth 2

**The best way to lose weight is to exercise.** Exercise is good for health and a good way to lose weight but it is not the best. When you exercise, sometimes paradoxically you end up gaining weight as your muscles grow (though not a bad thing unless the thighs you're trying to slim down end up looking bigger). Exercise burns calories but also stimulates appetite so you end up eating more. Problems arise when you stop exercising for various reasons like injury, taking a vacation or simply having no time. You stop burning the calories but your appetite is still as good as when you were exercising, so you eventually gain back all the weight you worked so hard to get rid of and sometimes even more! So if you are on an exercise programme, make sure you control your dietary intake also.

## Myth 3

**Diets never work.** Diet is given a bad name because too many people have done it wrongly. Common (but wrong) practice of dieting involves avoiding certain food, skipping a meal here and there, and crash dieting. Wrong dieting methods all result in rebound weight gain. It's not the type of food you take that makes you put on weight but the total amount of food (calories). When you make yourself too hungry by skipping a meal, you will naturally eat more the next meal. Crash dieting is unhealthy and can be dangerous. Good dieting programme is healthy, balanced and easy to follow.

## Myth 4

**Don't eat till you are full.** Most people will feel that they have had not enough till they feel some sense of fullness in the stomach. For most, however, by the time you feel the fullness in the stomach, you have had too much food. Our stomach capacity has grown through the years of eating till we are "stuffed" so its capacity is way bigger than what we need. To get around this problem, we must "shrink" our stomach so that we can feel full

with less food. Gastric banding operation for obesity is based on this concept. By embarking on a programme where we can eat very little, our stomach will gradually shrink down its capacity.

## Myth 5

**Liposuction can be a last resort.** Liposuction is for body contouring and not for weight loss. The amount of fats sucked out is usually not very significant compared to your body weight. You get a shapelier body from liposuction but the amount of visceral fats (fats inside your abdomen) remains the same and it is these fats that contribute to health risks. Rather than for a generally overweight person, liposuction is better suited for a slim person with targeted problem areas.

## Myth 6

**Many advertised treatments promise immediate weight loss.** Most of these "miracle" weight loss treatments only make you lose water. With the exception of liposuction where fats are taken out from the body, no other treatments can achieve immediate weight loss. It takes days to see true weight loss. Some of these treatments (usually with machines) are only effective in shaping up the body, tightening the skin and decreasing cellulite.

## Myth 7

**Only slimming salons offer slimming services.** The trend is now changing such that some medical (aesthetics) clinics now offer slimming programmes. Doctors have the advantage of having medical knowledge and access to prescription drugs used for slimming. There are many medical grade equipment available effective for body contouring and targeted slimming. Diet is the best way to lose weight but unfortunately some of us lose weight in areas where we don't need (e.g. breast and face) and fail to lose weight in those areas that bother us most (e.g. tummy and thighs). It is therefore an advantage to embark on a good diet programme coupled with a targeted slimming programme.

# Weight loss myth busters

The truth about losing weight

By Dr Ivan Tan Khee Hon

