



## **Tales About Foods and Drinks**

### **Feed a cold, starve a fever.**

False. Both high [fevers](#) and [colds](#) can cause fluid loss. Drinking plenty of liquids such as water, fruit juice, and vegetable juice can help prevent [dehydration](#). And with both fevers and colds, it's fine to eat regular [meals](#) - missing [nutrients](#) may only make a person sicker.

### **Wait an hour after eating before swimming.**

False. According to the American Red Cross, it's usually not necessary for you or your child to wait an hour before going in the [water](#). However, it *is* recommended that you wait until digestion has begun, especially if you've had a big fatty meal and you plan to swim strenuously. The Red Cross also advises against chewing gum or eating while in the water, both of which could cause [choking](#).

### **Coffee stunts your growth.**

False. Coffee won't affect a child's [growth](#), but too much [caffeine](#) doesn't belong in a child's diet. Excess caffeine can prevent the absorption of calcium and other nutrients.

### **Fish is brain food.**

True. Fish is a good source of omega-3 fatty acids that have been found to be very important for brain function. Certain fish, however, have significant levels of mercury. Therefore, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), suggests that pregnant women and women of child bearing age decrease their exposure to mercury by either avoiding eating swordfish, shark, and tuna, or limiting their consumption to these fish to once per month.

### **Eating carrots will improve your eyesight.**

False. This tale may have started during World War II, when British intelligence spread a rumor that their pilots had remarkable night vision because they ate lots of carrots. They didn't want the Germans to know they were using radar. Carrots - and many other vegetables high in vitamin A - do help maintain [healthy eyesight](#), but eating more than the recommended daily allowance won't improve vision.

## **Tales About Health and Medical Conditions**

### **Reading in dim light will damage your eyes.**

False. Although reading in a dimly lit room won't do any harm, good lighting can help prevent eye fatigue and make reading easier.

### **Too much TV is bad for your eyes.**

False. Watching [television](#) won't hurt your eyes (no matter how close to the TV you sit), although too much TV can be a bad idea for kids. Research shows that children who consistently spend more than 10 hours a week watching TV are more likely to be [overweight](#), aggressive, and slower to learn in school.

### **If you cross your eyes, they'll stay that way.**

False. Only about 4% of the children in the United States have **strabismus**, a disorder in which the eyes are misaligned, giving the appearance that they're looking in different directions. Eye crossing does not lead to [strabismus](#).

### **Thumb sucking causes buck teeth.**

True ... and false. [Thumb sucking](#) often begins before birth and generally continues until age 5. If a child stops around the ages of 4 to 5, no harm will be done to his or her jaws and teeth. However, parents should discourage thumb sucking after the age of 4, when the gums, jaw, and permanent teeth begin their most significant growth. It is, therefore, after this age that there is a possibility that thumb, finger, or pacifier sucking will contribute to buck teeth.

### **Cracking knuckles causes arthritis.**

False. However, habitual knuckle cracking tends to cause hand swelling, decreased grip strength, and can result in functional hand impairment.