

# EAT BETTER

Registered nutritionist Anita Bean reveals the truth behind the latest food trends

## The new diet rules

**S**tarting your day's eating at 10am and finishing by 6pm could help you shed a few pounds, a new study has found. This intermittent fasting – the 16:8 diet because you fast for 16 hours then eat whatever you want for eight – allowed overweight people to lose around 3% of their weight in 12 weeks, and lowered their blood pressure by 7mmHg. Although you don't count calories or cut foods, restricting your eating 'window' causes people to consume around 300 fewer calories a day, which leads to weight loss. It's not a miracle diet – it's just one way of achieving a calorie deficit. On the plus side, it gets you away from calorie counting and doesn't forbid any foods. But it's still pretty restrictive; eating within a 10–11 hour daily window is more realistic and has similar benefits according to other studies.



## GO WITH YOUR GUT

**A** new study has found that having the right gut microbes can reduce your risk of heart disease. Researchers found that women with hardening of the arteries had fewer types of 'good' microbes in their gut, while those with healthier arteries had greater microbial diversity. These 'good' microbes produce chemicals that help lower inflammation, a key factor in the development of heart disease and other diseases like type 2 diabetes. You can give your gut bacteria a helping hand by upping your fibre intake. New findings from the American Gut research project suggest we should try to eat at least 30 different types of plants (whole grains, fruit, veg, beans, lentils and nuts) each week. People who do this have a much more diverse gut microbiome than those who consumed fewer than 10 types of plant.



## OTHER WAYS TO MILK IT

**I**f you can't tolerate or prefer not to drink dairy milk, there's a (confusing!) array of alternatives out there. Look for brands with added calcium and vitamins.

◆ **Soya** – the best non-dairy option for protein, which is similar to milk. One 250ml glass provides 8g of soya protein, a third of the 25g experts say reduces cholesterol. It's a good all-rounder for drinks and baking.

◆ **Almond** – Almond milk doesn't have the same benefits as many of the nutrients found in almonds, as they

are not found in significant amounts in the milk. Low in protein.

◆ **Coconut** – Most brands contain less than 1% protein. For a smoother taste, try Vita Coco, made with more coconut than other brands yet with only 2% fat, akin to semi-skimmed.

◆ **Hemp** – Low in protein with good levels of omega-3 fats. One 250ml glass contains half the recommended amount. (And it won't get you high!)

◆ **Oat** – contains beta glucan, a soluble fibre; a 250 ml glass has 1g, a third of the suggested daily intake for lowering cholesterol. Low in protein with a calorie content higher than other non-dairy milks. Good for coffee, tea and porridge.

## The TRUTH about... ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

### THE CLAIM



◆ They help you lose weight

◆ They cause cancer

◆ They harm your good gut microbes

### THE TRUTH



◆ Replacing added sugar with artificial sweeteners can help reduce your calorie intake

◆ EFSA and Cancer Research UK state there is strong evidence that they are safe

◆ Some evidence that they do disrupt gut microbe balance

### IF YOU'RE STILL CONCERNED?

◆ Try switching to natural sweeteners such as stevia or xylitol



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