

Health Myths our Moms taught us

“Behold, you have instructed many, and you have strengthened the weak hands.”

Job 4:3

Don’t swim for an hour after you eat – you’ll get a cramp. I remember the days of looking longingly at the water as the seconds ticked by, waiting for that magic one hour mark! If we had only known that this precaution was entirely unneeded. While it is true that after we eat our blood flow diverts to our stomach to help with digestion, the fact is that there is still plenty of blood left to supply our arms and legs. The real danger comes after enjoying a few alcoholic beverages and diving in, so unless your kids had lunch from the mini bar, it is safe for them to splash and play right after they eat.

Once you begin shaving, the hair will grow in thicker. This is something we’ve all heard over the years. While it may have sounded like good news to the teenage boy who wanted to grow a mustache, most girls were not pleased with this prediction. The fact is that it is entirely untrue. Hair grows from below the skin, and will continue to grow in its own fashion whether you shave or not. The myth probably comes from the way the hairs feel a few days after a shave. Long hairs bend and flow, while the short ones just poking out don’t, so they feel coarser. Also, the end of our hair tends to be tapered, but with shaving that end becomes blunt which may make it feel stiff. So whether you shave or not, you will not change the texture of your hair.

The dark will hurt your eyes. Remember reading or watching TV in a dimly lit room, and having one of your parents turn on the lights? They were convinced that these activities would ruin your eyesight. In reality, the worst thing that may happen is your eyes will grow tired more quickly, but there is no permanent damage associated with reading or TV viewing in the dark. So, saving energy will not lead to bad eyesight.

Drink eight glasses of water a day. This myth is still being touted, and is based on a statement made in the 1940’s by the National Research Council that we should have one milliliter of water for every calorie we consume. Based on a 1900 calorie diet, that comes to about 164 ounces of water a day. They also pointed out that most of our water comes from the food we eat, but this fact seems to have been forgotten. The best thing to do is listen to your body—if you are thirsty, drink. The Center for Nutrition tells us that any non-alcoholic beverage will provide us with the water we need, so you don’t need to restrict yourself to water alone.

Put Hydrogen Peroxide on that cut or scrape. It’s a lot of fun to pour hydrogen peroxide on a minor injury and watch it bubble up. But what you are actually seeing is skin cells dying—medical science has learned that it does more damage than good. The very best way to clean a cut or scrape is good old soap and water, then a dab of neosporin or antibiotic ointment and you are good to go.

For more information, check out: www.firstaidweb.com & www.tlc.howstuffworks.com

Blessings, Nurse Karen