

Medical Myths II

LexiMed Educates is going to take another look at some strange, funny and sometimes weird medical myths and the stories behind them.

The Myth	True or False?	The facts....	
Cold weather makes you sick.	False	<p>Eyeing the dropping temps with trepidation since they typically trigger a cold or flu? Turns out, Mother Nature isn't to blame.</p> <p>"While it is true that people do get sick more often during the colder months of the year, cold weather itself does not cause illness," says Dr. Judy Tung, chair, department of medicine at NewYork-Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital and associate professor of clinical medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. "The seasonality of certain viruses, like influenza, as well as more time spent indoors when it's cold out, encourages viral spread. The majority of upper respiratory infections are caused by viruses, and exposure to these germs and the ability of your immune system to fight is what makes you sick."</p>	
You will produce enough saliva to fill two swimming pools.	True	<p>During your lifetime, you will produce enough saliva to fill two swimming pools. Actually, Saliva is more important than you realize. If your saliva cannot dissolve something, you cannot taste it.</p>	
Carrots Give You Night Vision.	False	<p>It would be awesome if this was true, but while carrots are good for your sight, they aren't that good. Scheney believes that this myth may have grown from some WWII psy-ops: false information about how Ally pilots managed to shoot down enemies at night was distributed to prevent German forces from finding out that new radar technology had been adopted.</p>	
The Flu Shot Gives You the Flu.	False	<p>Especially at this time of year, this myth usually surfaces in news coverage, stating that by getting a flu shot, you are actually being given the flu. In fact, flu vaccines are either made with inactive flu virus or no virus at all.</p>	

Humans share 60% of their DNA with bananas.

True

It's common knowledge that humans share 96% of their DNA with chimpanzees. But did you know we're also closely genetically related to bananas and slugs, sharing up to 70% of DNA?



Chewing gum stays in your stomach for 7 years.

False

Although it is true that many of the ingredients in gum — such as elastomers, resins and waxes — are indigestible, that does not mean they hang out in your guts for seven years. Plenty of what you eat — even things you are recommended to eat, such as fiber — is indigestible. But the digestive system is a robust piece of organic machinery, and anything it can't absorb, it moves along. Despite the stickiness and strange consistency of gum, "it passes right through your digestive tract and into the toilet," Vreeman explained.



Microwave ovens cause cancer.

False

Microwaves heat your food: nothing more, nothing less. They do emit electromagnetic radiation, a form of nonionizing radiation similar to the radio frequency waves that come from your cell phone (which also won't give you cancer, by the way), but nonionizing radiation isn't known to cause cancer in humans because it isn't strong enough to alter the structure of cells.



Drinking alcohol raises your body temperature.

False

While you may feel warmer when you drink alcohol, that's the booze and your brain getting together and playing tricks on the rest of your body. In reality, alcohol actually lowers your core body temperature, according to an oft-cited 2005 study published in the scientific journal Alcohol.



Sources:

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