



The world of health is full of old wives' tales.

Over the years many of these have been **debunked** as our knowledge of the world has developed. Some still persist though and may even contain **a modicum of** truth.

Take Vitamin C, for example. It used to be said that taking regular doses could **ward off** colds.

Recent research has shown though that for most people, taking vitamin C does nothing to prevent us from catching a cold.

There is some evidence that it might slightly shorten the length of time we feel **under the weather** when we have a cold, but this is not **conclusive**.

Another **myth** that used to be popular was that eating carrots could help you see better at night.

This one does have some basis in fact. Carrots are a good source of Vitamin A, which is essential for healthy night vision.

However, increasing your carrot **consumption** won't give you **exceptional** vision at night. It only has an effect if you have a Vitamin A **deficiency** to start with. Night vision can only improve to the level of a healthy person.

Another **popularly held belief** is that giving children sugary drinks and **snacks** makes them **hyperactive**. This might seem common sense when you look at the behaviour of children at parties, for example.

However, the way our bodies process sugar does not result in excess energy that has to be worked off. Children get hyperactive because they are children and get excited. Sugar-filled **treats** might fuel their activity, but it doesn't cause it.

Vocabulary

debunked

proved not to be true

a modicum of

a small amount of

ward off

fight off, protect against

under the weather

unwell, poorly

conclusive

definitely proved

myth

old story that is believed to be true

consumption

eating

exceptional

excellent, super

deficiency

medical condition of not having enough of something

popularly held belief

something that a lot of people think is true

snacks

small items of food eaten between meals or at parties, for example

hyperactive

very energetic and unable to concentrate or sit still

treats

things that are nice to eat but not usually very healthy.

This story is based on an original BBC News story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-32289815>