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CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

8 WEIGHT MISTAKES

How to avoid expanding your bottom line

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN



Of every three American adults, one is obese, one is overweight, and only one is lean. And all of us are at risk for gaining more.

From the latest “you’ll never be hungry” diet to that “weird tip to lose belly fat,” most dieting myths focus on how to lose weight. Yet myths, misunderstandings, and excuses also explain how we got that spare tire in the first place.

If we knew more about what happens to the excess calories we eat—and how hard it may be to lose them for good—maybe we’d think twice before we reach for that extra slice of pizza or cheesecake.

Continued on page 3.

A Long Goodbye to Beef



Despite Americans' longtime love affair with steaks and burgers, we're slowly giving up our red-meat habit.

Consumption of beef has declined steadily since its heyday in the 1970s. We ate 32 percent less in 2012 than in 1970.

Americans' passion for meat, especially beef, has been cooling for several reasons:

■ **Health.** The saturated fat in beef promotes heart disease. (Ignore the "man bites dog" reports to the contrary.) What's more, "the evidence that red meat [and] processed meat... are causes of colorectal cancer is convincing," notes the World Cancer Research Foundation.

■ **Animal welfare.** Several groups have exposed the miserable way that cattle are sometimes treated. It doesn't take many videos of sick cows being dragged along a slaughterhouse floor to turn people into vegetarians.

■ **Greenhouse gases.** Cattle are big emitters of methane gas. Pound for pound, methane's impact on climate change is 20 times greater than carbon dioxide's, according to the EPA. To produce 1,000 calories of food, beef generates about five times as much greenhouse gas as dairy, poultry, pork, or eggs, says a recent study.

■ **Fertilizer, etc.** It takes a huge amount of energy to produce the fertilizer to grow the corn, soybeans, and other crops that are fed to cattle. Excess fertilizer washes down rivers and streams, leading to low-oxygen dead zones in the mouth of the Mississippi. Pesticides on those crops harm wildlife, while tons of manure from feedlots stink up neighborhoods and pollute rivers.

■ **Price.** Chicken and turkey are cheaper than beef. That's partly why poultry con-

sumption doubled between 1970 and 2012. Fortunately, poultry is better than beef for our health and the environment.

Controversy over eating beef is likely to heat up in 2015. First, in February the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee urged people to eat less red and processed meat, and to make sure it's lean. The powerful meat lobby is up in arms.

And several new books have exposed the true costs of meat. *Cowed* argues that



Good news for people, animals, and the planet. We're eating less beef.

by cutting our beef intake in half, "we can reduce pollution, global warming, medical costs, animal cruelty, loss of soil, loss of biodiversity, and germs resistant to antibiotics." *The Meat Racket* targets the bullying business practices of giant beef-hog-poultry producers, particularly Tyson. And *The Chain*

looks at corruption and the abuse of animals and workers in the hog industry.

Eating beef occasionally isn't harmful, and if you do, grass-fed is the way to go. But given the vast damage beef does to our health, to animals, and to the planet, I'm not surprised that more and more of us are saying "Hold the beef."

Mike Jacobson

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Corrections

- In the Jan./Feb. cover story, we incorrectly stated that celiac disease damages the large intestine. In fact, it damages the *small* intestine.
- In a March Quick Study on the impact of BPA on blood pressure (p. 12), we incorrectly stated that pressure fell 5 points more when people drank soy milk from cans than when they drank it from bottles. In fact, pressure fell 5 points *less*.

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8

WEIGHT MISTAKES

How to avoid expanding your bottom line

It's no secret that losing weight—and keeping it off—is tough. That's all the more reason to avoid moving up a pants size in the first place. Here we correct 8 common misconceptions to help you play defense in the battle of the bulge.

1 I can lose it later.

Let's say you've been on vacation. Or it's the holidays. You know you've put on a few pounds, but so what? You'll just cut back when things get back to normal, and your waist will shrink back to its pre-vacation or pre-holiday size in a few weeks, right?

Not so fast.

"A student of mine was interested in how long it would take somebody to lose the weight they had gained from holiday overeating if all they did was go back to their regular pre-Thanksgiving diet," says Kevin Hall, senior investigator in the Laboratory of Biological Modeling at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

"The funny thing was that they wouldn't have lost all the new weight by the time the next holiday period came around."

So just several weeks' worth of indulgence can have lasting consequences.

"If you never quite lose the weight that you gained the previous year, you're just ratcheting your weight up year after year after year," explains Hall.

Why does it take so long to lose those extra pounds that you put on so quickly? The old rule of thumb—that you can expect to lose a pound for every 3,500 calories you cut—is wrong for several reasons.^{1,2} For example:

■ **You've lost muscle.** The 3,500-calorie rule assumes that you've lost only fat. In fact, about 25 percent of the weight that dieters lose is lean tissue.

"Most of the lean body mass is skeletal

muscle," says Hall. "And even at rest, it burns more calories than fat tissue."

■ **Your organs are smaller.** "As you lose weight, your liver, kidneys, and other organs shrink," says Hall. "So the number of calories that are required to keep those organs operating goes down."

Roughly 60 to 70 percent of your calories are used just to keep your heart beating, your kidneys filtering blood, etc., 24 hours a day.

"The liver and kidneys are much smaller than the sum total of your skeletal muscles," explains Hall. "But per unit weight, they are 10 to 20 times more active than skeletal muscle at rest. So even small changes in these organs can make relatively substantial changes in metabolic rate."

■ **Exercise burns fewer calories.** As your body becomes smaller, moving it around becomes easier. Going for a walk or climbing the stairs burns fewer calories than it used to.

■ **Your metabolism is slower.**

"Your metabolism slows down when you cut calories," says Hall. It's as though your body is hunkering down to face scarcity, so it burns fewer calories per minute.

"We've actually measured contestants on the television show 'The Biggest Loser,'" says Hall. "These folks were doing a lot of exercise, so they were preserving their lean tissue as much as possible." (Only 18 percent of their lost weight was lean tissue.)

But their metabolic rate still fell by an average of about 800 calories per day.³

"You could explain only about 300 of the 800 calories by their smaller

size," notes Hall. The remaining 500 calories were due to slower metabolism.

"Now, their case is an extreme," he

adds. But even if you went from, say, 165 pounds to 145 pounds, you would have to eat fewer calories than you ate before you first gained those 20 pounds.

"Once you lose at least 10 percent of your weight and your weight is stable, you may need to eat 10 to 15 percent fewer calories to keep the weight off," says Hall. That's because your body burns fewer calories both at rest and when you move.⁴

Hall and his colleagues have created an online body weight calculator that considers all those changes to estimate how long it will take you to lose, say, 20 pounds.

"We built our online simulators for people to better understand how changes in diet and physical activity can be traded off to both get to a goal and then maintain that goal permanently," he explains.

(Go to bwsimulator.niddk.nih.gov or download the free Body Weight Simulator app for the iPhone.)

Bottom line: A slower metabolism and less lean mass make it hard to lose all the extra pounds you gain.

2 Once it's off, it'll stay off.

You go on a diet for six months. Gone are those extra 10 or 20 pounds. But slowly, they start to reappear. That's what happens in most large studies.⁵ What's up?

"We've looked at body weight changes to figure out what people have done to their food intake, and what we found was pretty surprising," says Hall.

"Initially, most people go like gangbusters. They're pretty good about sticking to their weight-loss program for a while."

But they gradually start to eat more, and they don't notice because they keep losing weight. That's because they're still eating less than when they started dieting. (See "Calories & Pounds: We're Back!" p. 4.)

"By the time they reach their maximum success, after six to eight months, they're

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■ **Metabolic slowdown.** Lost at least 10 percent of your weight? To keep it off, you may have to eat 10 to 15 percent fewer calories than you did before you gained it.

about 80 percent of the way back to what they were eating at the beginning of the weight-loss program," says Hall.

"They're eating, say, 100 calories per day less, whereas they started out probably cutting about 700 calories out of their diet. So 80 percent of that initial diet has been lost."

And their weight creeps back up.

"We're working on tools to track peoples' weight," says Hall, "so we can provide early warning signs that they've started to back off on their original diet."

Bottom line: Many dieters regain lost weight because they gradually start eating more.

3 Fat is fat, no matter where it is.

When you overeat, your body needs to stash the excess calories somewhere. But your odds of losing those extra pounds—and their impact on your health—depend on where the fat ends up. And much of that is beyond your control (see No. 5).

"We know that if people gain leg fat, they actually gain new fat cells, so they're sort of stuck with new fat cells," says Michael Jensen, director of the Obesity Treatment Research Program at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

That's not true for belly fat.

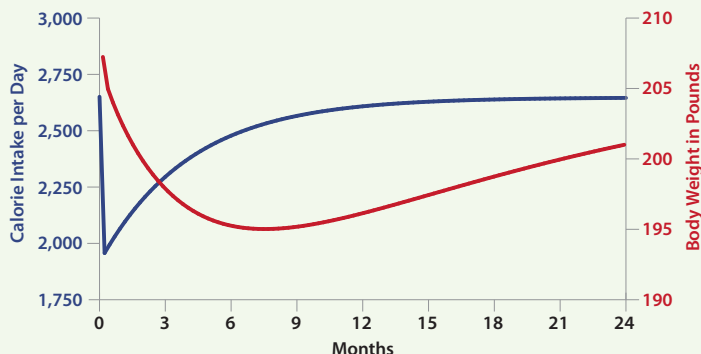
"At least with modest weight gain, almost all the weight gain in upper body fat is an increase in fat cell size," says Jensen. "Each fat cell just agrees to store a little bit more. That makes upper body fat easier to lose."

Jensen and his colleagues fed 23 lean men and women an extra 400 to 1,200 calories a day as ice cream shakes, Snickers bars, and Boost Plus energy drinks.⁶ After two months, their weight jumped by about eight pounds.

After another two months—during which the participants cut their calories and boosted their exercise—they only lost an average of six pounds. And what remained was mostly extra leg fat.

"When we look at the loss of that gained weight, upper body fat goes away

CALORIES & POUNDS: WE'RE BACK!



Regain. Most people slash calories (blue line) when they start a diet. Then they gradually start eating more, but don't realize it because they're still losing weight (red line)...at least for a while.

Source: *Obesity* 22: 2105, 2014.

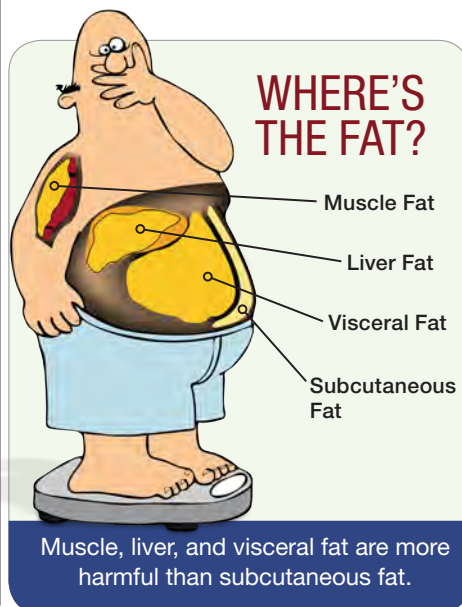
first and leg fat goes away last, because you created a whole new set of cells there," says Jensen. "Once you have a new fat cell, it's very hard to get rid of it, so it's the last place you will lose weight."

And it's not just a few cells. In another study, Jensen found that 3½ pounds of new leg fat created roughly 2.6 billion new fat cells within two months.⁷ Sure you need that cupcake?

Of course, those upper body fat cells can't keep getting bigger and bigger.

"Your fat cells can only get so big," explains Jensen. "From the smallest fat cell to the biggest fat cell is only about a four-fold increase. And we all know people who have gained more than four times as much fat as they had when they were skinny. So eventually, you have to start recruiting new fat cells."

Apparently, we all have pre-adipocytes



(pre-fat cells) that are just waiting to be pressed into service whenever we need them.

The irony: storing more fat in your legs is actually healthier.

"People who gain predominantly leg fat tend to have a much better metabolic profile than people who put on a lot of abdominal fat," notes Jensen. "They're less likely to get diabetes, less likely to get high cholesterol and high triglycerides, and less likely to get hypertension and sleep apnea."

"My biggest worry is when a patient comes in with a big

gut and skinny legs," he adds. "I know they're probably in trouble."

It's not clear why upper body fat—especially the deep-belly visceral fat—is worse. One possibility: visceral fat cells may send more fat to the liver. Or a generous layer of visceral fat may be a sign that your subcutaneous fat is faulty.⁸

"One speculation is that people gain visceral fat because the subcutaneous fat in their abdomen and thighs is not doing its job," says Jensen. "Its job is to sequester fat from the excess calories you ate so that it can't harm your lean tissue."

"And if the subcutaneous fat can't do its job, the fallback job goes to the visceral fat. And if the visceral fat can't do its job, the fat starts building up in your liver and muscles and other places where you really, really don't want it."

Why?

"Those organs can't package fat in the safe triglyceride form very well," explains Jensen. "So the fatty acids—the individual components of triglycerides—can interfere with cell function."

You might end up with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, for example.

"It's as though you kept putting gas in the gas tank when it's full and now it's running all over the side of your car," says Jensen. "It's a bad situation."

Bottom line: Extra calories can lead to leg fat that's tough to lose or deep-belly fat that's a risk to your health.

4 You have to go out of your way to overeat.

You needn't sit at home all day and stuff your mouth with potato chips, candy bars, and ice cream to

end up with a spare tire. You just have to eat—like most of us do—in restaurants, shopping malls, movie theaters, ballparks, airports, drug stores, gas stations, and at virtually every other public place.

“Food is now available everywhere,” says Kevin Hall, of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. “It’s even socially acceptable to eat during meetings. In fact, food is now provided at meetings.”

Where *isn't* food available? And the size of meals has grown.

“The restaurant is a toxic environment,” says Susan Roberts, director of the Energy Metabolism Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University. “The portion sizes are enormous, and the calories are excessive.”

In a 2013 study, she and colleagues analyzed the calories in the 42 most frequently eaten meals from independent and small-chain sit-down restaurants in the Boston area. They included popular cuisines like Mexican, American, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Thai, Indian, Greek, and Vietnamese.

“These establishments make up half of all restaurants but offer no calories or other Nutrition Facts on their menus,” notes Roberts.

The average meal had roughly 1,300 calories—about two-thirds of the calories an average person needs in a day.⁹

“And people have no idea how many calories they’re eating,” adds Roberts.

Bottom line: What’s typically served in restaurants can make you gain weight.

5 All extra calories are equal.

Can you change where your extra calories end up?

“There’s certainly some genetic component to it,” says Mayo’s Michael Jensen. “Women, because of female hormones, are going to be more able to store leg fat than men.” (That is, until menopause, when they may wonder where that waist went.)

“It turns out that smokers are probably not as good at making new leg fat cells,” he adds. “And people who drink a lot of alcohol tend to store more fat in the abdominal area.”

Saturated fat may also make a beeline to your belly. Swedish scientists added enough 250-calorie muffins—typically three a day—to the diets of 39 young lean adults to make them gain about

3½ pounds over seven weeks. But those who got muffins made with saturated fat (palm oil) gained more visceral and liver fat than those who got muffins made with a polyunsaturated fat (sunflower oil).¹⁰

And it’s not just palm oil. The same researchers found more liver fat when they fed obese people butter instead of sunflower oil. (That study didn’t measure visceral fat.)¹¹

The extra calories from added sugars like sucrose and high-fructose corn syrup may also prefer to settle in deep-belly fat.

When researchers gave 32 overweight or obese middle-aged men and women a high dose of fructose or glucose for 10 weeks, both groups gained about three pounds.¹²

“But fructose significantly increased visceral fat, while glucose did not,” explains Kimber Stanhope, associate researcher at the University of California, Davis.

(Since we get glucose from nearly all carbs but fructose only from sugars, the only way to limit fructose is to limit added sugars—from soft drinks, frappuccinos, cookies, cakes, ice cream, muffins, doughnuts, scones, candy, and other sweets.)

“A Danish study that gave overweight people a much smaller dose of fructose—a liter of sucrose-sweetened cola per day for six months—also found an increase in visceral fat,” notes Stanhope.¹³ “More studies are needed, but this direct experimental evidence suggests that sugars may increase visceral fat.”

Bottom line: Excess calories from foods high in sugars or saturated fats may be more likely to settle in deep-belly fat.



EAT OUT, FILL OUT

Most typical restaurant dishes have at least 1,000 calories. It’s easy to gain weight if you eat what restaurants serve.

Food	Calories
Uno Chicago Classic Deep Dish Pizza	2,300
Famous Dave’s Baby Back Ribs (<i>full rack</i>) w/baked beans, fries, corn bread	2,110
Outback Steakhouse 16 oz. Herb Prime Rib w/Caesar salad, garlic mashed potatoes	2,000
Buffalo Wild Wings Traditional Wings w/blue cheese (<i>small order, around 10 wings</i>)	1,940
Five Guys Bacon Cheeseburger w/regular fries	1,870
IHOP Hearty Ham & Cheese Omelette w/3 buttermilk pancakes w/syrup	1,730
Chili’s Smoked Chicken Quesadillas	1,720
Joe’s Crab Shack Seaside Platter (<i>fish, chips, jumbo shrimp, breaded scallops, coleslaw</i>)	1,650
Olive Garden Chicken Alfredo	1,540
On The Border Mesquite-Grilled Steak Fajita w/3 flour tortillas, sour cream, guacamole, cheese, pico de gallo, rice, black beans	1,460
Outback Steakhouse 14 oz. New York Strip Steak w/Caesar salad, dressed baked potato	1,410
P.F. Chang’s Kung Pao Chicken w/rice	1,370
Chili’s Cajun Pasta with Grilled Chicken	1,270
Denny’s All-American Slam (<i>3 eggs, cheese, 2 bacon strips, 2 sausage links, hash browns, 2 slices toast</i>)	1,220
P.F. Chang’s Combo Fried Rice	1,210
Chili’s Skillet Chocolate Chip Cookie	1,200
Chili’s Molten Chocolate Cake	1,160
Maggiano’s Shrimp Scampi	1,130
Olive Garden Spaghetti with Meatballs	1,120
Romano’s Macaroni Grill Lasagna Bolognese	1,110
Olive Garden Fettuccine Alfredo	1,090
Häagen-Dazs Banana Split Dazzler Sundae	1,080
California Pizza Kitchen Original BBQ Chicken or California Veggie Pizza	1,070
P.F. Chang’s Shrimp Pad Thai	1,070
Olive Garden Eggplant Parmigiana w/spaghetti	1,050
California Pizza Kitchen California Cobb Salad w/bleu cheese dressing	1,030
Pei Wei Chicken Lo Mein (<i>Original size</i>)	1,030
Chipotle Chicken Burrito (<i>rice, black beans, salsa, sour cream, cheese</i>)	1,020
Uno Pepperoni Flatbread Pizza	990
Häagen-Dazs Classic Hot Fudge Sundae (<i>reg. size</i>)	980
Panera Mac & Cheese (<i>full size</i>)	980
IHOP Original Buttermilk Pancakes (<i>5</i>) w/syrup	970
IHOP Original French Toast w/syrup	940
Romano’s Macaroni Grill Mushroom Ravioli	930
Cinnabon Classic Roll	880
Panera Fontina Grilled Cheese Sandwich	850
The Cheesecake Factory Original Cheesecake	820
Starbucks Java Chip Frappuccino (<i>venti, 24 fl. oz.</i>)	600

Source: restaurant chains. Chart compiled by Paige Einstein.

6 You can boost your metabolism.

“Metabolism boost,” boasts the label of Organic Matcha green tea powder, which also claims to be a “calorie burner.” “Supports energy and metabolism,” claims Herbalife Herbal Tea Concentrate.

The catch: companies need virtually no evidence to make those claims. “This boosting of metabolism is pretty overblown,” says Tufts’ Susan Roberts.

“Magazines and supplements love to talk about ways to boost your metabolism. But you can eat a brownie with 700 calories in about 10 seconds, and there is nothing that you can remotely do to change your metabolism by anywhere near that much, except to give up your job and spend all your day in the gym.”

Take green tea. Some small studies report that it leads to a bump in metabolic rate, but long-term studies find that it makes little or no difference in weight.¹⁴

The largest study: With funding from Coca-Cola, researchers randomly assigned 572 people to a weight-loss program with or without three daily cans of diet cola, each fortified with green tea extract (83 mg of EGCG) and caffeine (100 mg). After three months, the diet-cola drinkers had lost no more weight than the others.¹⁵

Does anything help you burn more calories per minute?

“Exercise is going to help a bit because muscle is more metabolically active than fat,” says Roberts. “So if you have five more pounds of muscle and five pounds less fat, it will make a bit of difference, but not a huge difference.

“Weight control is dominated by how many calories you eat. That’s the honest truth.”

Bottom line: Don’t expect to lose much weight from “metabolism boosters.”

7 There’s a magic bullet diet.

The Paleo Diet. The Sugar Impact Diet. The New Atkins Diet. All promise to make the pounds peel away fast.

Most experts wouldn’t agree. In 2013, the Obesity Society, American Heart Association, and American College of Cardiology issued a report on overweight and obesity.⁵ Its advice: cut calories or try a diet that’s low in fat or carbs or whatever.

“We started off with different, almost religious, beliefs as to what diet would be better,” says the Mayo Clinic’s Michael Jensen. “And we wound up being agnostic.

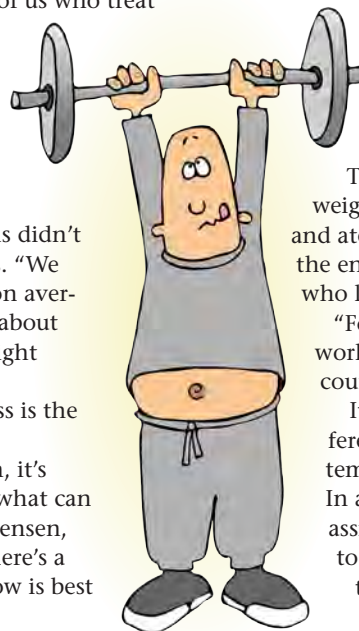
“We looked for studies that had results for at least a year, and preferably two years, because for most of us who treat patients with obesity, it’s not what they did in six months that matters, it’s what they did in two years that really drives our decision making.”

And those longer trials didn’t reveal any magic bullets. “We found that in the end, on average, the diets produced about the same amount of weight loss,” says Jensen.

The key for weight loss is the long game.

“For any given person, it’s really more a matter of what can they stick with,” notes Jensen, “rather than whether there’s a specific diet that we know is best for them.”

Bottom line: Don’t pin your hopes on the latest “miracle” diet.



Exercise can help keep you healthy, but it won’t make the pounds peel off.

because they found a huge variability.”

UK researchers had 35 overweight or obese men and women exercise (on a stationary bike, treadmill, or stepping or rowing machine) long and hard enough to burn 500 calories per session, five times a week.¹⁸

After 12 weeks, the average weight loss was 8 pounds, but some people lost 32 pounds, while others gained 4 pounds. Those who lost the least weight also reported more hunger and ate more on a given day near the end of the study than did those who lost the most weight.

“For some people it was clearly working, but for others it was counterproductive,” says Roberts.

It’s not just individual differences. Other factors, like temperature, might also matter.

In a recent study, researchers assigned 16 overweight people to walk for 45 minutes on a treadmill when the room temperature was either 46° or 68° Fahrenheit.¹⁹ They ate more calories (1,300) at an all-you-can-eat buffet after walking in the cold

temperature than after walking in the typical indoor temperature (1,170 calories).

“You need to keep doing exercise for your health, for preventing disabilities and problems in old age,” says Roberts. “But for most people, exercise is not the solution for losing weight.”

Bottom line: Exercise when you can, but don’t count on it alone to lose—or keep off—extra pounds. 🍌

8 I can work off the extra calories.

So what if you had General Tso’s chicken or steak fajitas for dinner? So what if you shared a large bucket of popcorn at the movies? You can always work it off, right?

“People totally overestimate how many calories they’ll burn when they exercise,” says Roberts.

“We recently asked people, ‘What do you need to do to lose weight?’ About three-quarters of them said, ‘My trouble is that I stopped going to the gym’ or ‘I’ve been lazy. I need to go to the gym.’ They were beating themselves up because they weren’t doing enough exercise.”

In fact, most studies find that people who are told to cut calories lose more weight than those who are told to exercise more, though a mix of diet plus exercise is best in many studies.^{16,17}

“Exercise for weight loss is often unhelpful,” says Roberts. “Several years ago, a study looked at the individual response to an exercise program. It was terrifying

¹ *Lancet* 378: 826, 2011.

² *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 95: 989, 2012.

³ *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 97: 2489, 2012.

⁴ *Int. J. Obes.* 34: S47, 2010.

⁵ *Circulation* 129 (25 Suppl 2): S102, 2014.

⁶ *Am J. Clin. Nutr.* 96: 229, 2012.

⁷ *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci.* 107: 18226, 2010.

⁸ *Cell Metab.* 17: 644, 2013.

⁹ *JAMA Intern. Med.* 173: 1292, 2013.

¹⁰ *Diabetes* 63: 2356, 2014.

¹¹ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 95: 1003, 2012.

¹² *J. Clin. Invest.* 119: 1322, 2009.

¹³ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 95: 283, 2012.

¹⁴ *Int. J. Sport Nutr. Exerc. Metab.* 22: 139, 2012.

¹⁵ *Brit. J. Nutr.* 111: 372, 2014.

¹⁶ *Obesity* 22: 325, 2014.

¹⁷ *PLoS ONE* 2014. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0109849.

¹⁸ *Int. J. Obes.* 32: 177, 2008.

¹⁹ *Med. Sci. Sports Exerc.* 47: 49, 2015.



Blueberry Bonus

Blueberries may help lower blood pressure and make arteries more flexible.

Researchers randomly assigned 48 postmenopausal women with prehypertension or hypertension (high blood pressure) to eat a daily dose of freeze-dried blueberry powder or a fake blueberry powder made of sugar, maltodextrin, and artificial colors and flavors. The dose of freeze-dried blueberry powder (22 grams) was equivalent to one cup of fresh blueberries.

After two months, systolic blood pressure

dropped by an impressive 7 points and diastolic pressure fell by 5 points in the freeze-dried-blueberry eaters, but neither budged in those who got the imitation blueberry. What's more, the arteries of the blueberry eaters—but not the fake-blueberry eaters—were less stiff than they were when the people entered the study.

What to do: Eat more blueberries. This study doesn't prove that the fruit will lower blood pressure and make arteries less stiff. It's possible that another fruit might be equally effective, that freeze-dried blueberries work better than fresh blueberries, or that the impact of blueberries would wane over time. But with such a flavor-rich, fiber-rich, vitamin-rich, low-calorie fruit, what have you got to lose?

J. Acad. Nutr. Diet. 115: 369, 2015.

Insulin & Memory

Long-acting insulin administered via the nose may help some people with memory loss, according to a pilot study.

Researchers randomly assigned 60 people with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease to get either a placebo or one of two intranasal doses (20 or 40 IU a day) of a long-acting type of insulin (insulin detemir).

After three weeks, only those who got the higher dose scored better on a composite of several memory tests asking them to recall a list of words or a story immediately or after 20 minutes.

But when the researchers dug deeper into the data, they found that insulin only helped people on the higher dose if they had APOE-4 (a common variation of a gene that boosts the risk of dementia). Those without APOE-4 did worse after taking insulin.

What's more, people with APOE-4 who

got the higher dose of insulin had less insulin resistance—that is, their body's insulin was more effective—than if they got a placebo. In contrast, people without APOE-4 who took the higher dose of insulin had *more* insulin resistance.

What to do: It's too early to know if intranasal insulin can improve memory in people with—or at risk for—Alzheimer's. In the meantime, protect your brain with exercise and by keeping your blood sugar and blood pressure under control. (See *NAH*, Jan./Feb. 2014, cover story.)

J. Alzheimer's Dis. 44: 897, 2015.



Choco-Chubby?

Chocolate eaters weigh less than others, say some studies. That has fueled media reports claiming that chocolate somehow keeps you slim.

New research suggests otherwise.

Researchers tracked roughly 107,000 postmenopausal women aged 50 to 79 for three years. Compared to those who ate a serving (1 oz.) of chocolate candy less than once a month, women who ate chocolate one to three times a month gained an average of 1.7 pounds, those who ate chocolate one or two times a week gained two pounds, and those who ate chocolate at least three times a week gained three pounds over three years.

What to do: Sorry, but you can't ignore the calories in chocolate, whether it's dark or not. This type of study can't prove that chocolate causes weight gain. Something else about chocolate eaters may explain the extra pounds. But studies that reported *less* obesity among chocolate eaters didn't follow people over time, like this one did.

Obesity 2015. doi:10.1002/oby.20983.

Vitamins & Depression

Can B vitamins prevent depression, as some media outlets have claimed? A new study says no.

Scientists tracked roughly 4,330 postmenopausal women who were at risk for a heart attack, stroke, or other cardiovascular event, but who had no history of depression. The women were given high doses of the B vitamin folic acid (2,500 micrograms a day), vitamin B-6 (50 milligrams a day), and vitamin B-12 (1,000 mcg a day), or a placebo.

After seven years, the researchers found no lower (or higher) risk of depression in the women who got the high doses of B vitamins.

What to do: Be skeptical of articles that claim that B vitamins can lower your risk of depression. 🍌

Brit. J. Psychiatr. 2015. doi:10.1192/bjp.bp.114.148361.

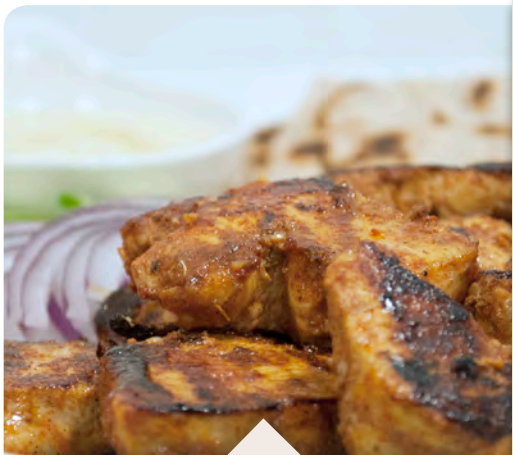


Street Smart

BY KATE SHERWOOD

These three dishes are inspired by street food from around the world. 🍴

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org.



Turkish-Spiced Chicken

Pair it with any whole grain and a salad. Or with Yogurt-Tahini sauce (see Dish of the Month, back cover) and sliced vegetables (carrot, cucumber, red onion, romaine) in a whole wheat pita.

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbs. smoked or regular paprika
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- pinch of cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs

In a medium bowl, whisk together all the ingredients except the chicken. • Cut the chicken into 1-inch-wide strips across the width. Add the chicken to the spice mixture and mix to coat the chicken pieces completely. • Heat a large non-stick pan over medium heat until hot. Cook the chicken, turning once, until browned and cooked through, 3-5 minutes. Serves 4.

Per serving: calories 210 | carbs 2 g
total fat 10 g | sat fat 1.5 g | sodium 170 mg
fiber 1 g | protein 26 g

Time: 15 mins.

Chinese Omelet

An omelet makes a quick and easy dinner.

- 2 tsp. + 1 tsp. canola oil
- ¼ lb. shiitake mushroom caps, sliced
- 1 tsp. + 2 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 4 scallions, chopped
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 cups snow peas, sliced
- 2 cups bean sprouts
- ½ red bell pepper, sliced

In a large non-stick pan, heat 2 tsp. of the oil over medium heat until shimmering. Stir-fry the mushrooms until browned, 2-3 minutes. Add 1 tsp. of the soy sauce and the scallions and stir-fry for 1 minute. • Reduce the heat to low. Pour in the eggs. Cover and cook, undisturbed, until the egg is set, 2-3 minutes. Remove to a plate. • Increase the heat to high. Add the remaining 1 tsp. of oil and stir-fry the snow peas, bean sprouts, and bell pepper until hot, about 2 minutes. Season with the remaining 2 tsp. of soy sauce. • Spoon the vegetables onto half the omelet. Fold the other half over the vegetables. Serves 2.

Per serving: calories 300 | carbs 19 g
total fat 17 g | sat fat 3.5 g | sodium 450 mg
fiber 5 g | protein 20 g

Time: 20 mins.



Singapore-Style Tofu & Shredded Veg

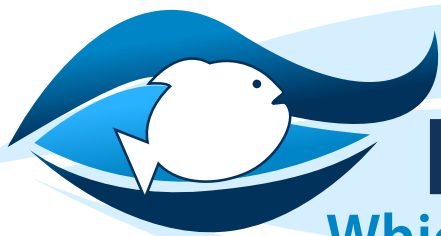
Try to get a mix of cabbages. We used baby bok choy and red cabbage. You can also use a pre-shredded coleslaw mix.

- 1 14 oz. package extra-firm tofu, cut into ½" cubes
- 2 Tbs. + 1 Tbs. canola oil
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp. brown sugar
- 6 cups shredded cabbage

Blot the tofu with a paper towel. • In a large non-stick pan, heat 2 Tbs. of the oil over medium heat. Stir-fry the tofu until lightly browned, 3-5 minutes. Sprinkle with the curry powder and stir-fry for another minute. Remove to a large bowl. • Heat the remaining 1 Tbs. of oil over medium-high heat. Stir-fry the onion until browned, 5-7 minutes. Season with the soy sauce and sugar. Remove to the bowl with the tofu. • Stir-fry the cabbage until just hot, 30-60 seconds. • Toss all the ingredients back into the pan and combine. Serves 2.

Per serving: calories 490 | carbs 28 g
total fat 32 g | sat fat 3 g | sodium 630 mg
fiber 10 g | protein 25 g

Time: 20 mins.



FISH FOR THE BEST

Which are good for you...and the planet?

BY DAVID SCHARDT

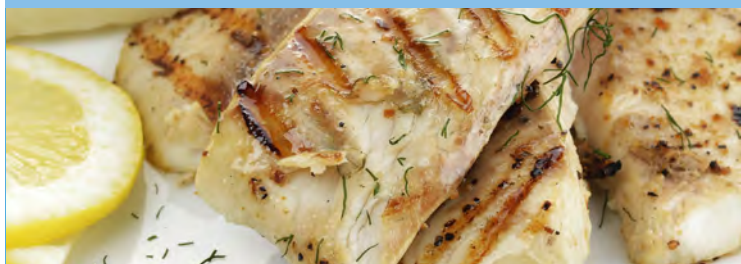
PCBs, mercury, antibiotic residues, dioxins, sea lice in ocean pens, leveled mangrove forests, depleted fish stocks. There are plenty of reasons to be wary of seafood.

But there also are plenty of reasons to eat it. People who consume more seafood have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, and Alzheimer's. Researchers aren't sure if that's because of DHA and EPA, the omega-3 fats in fish, or because seafood eaters do other things to protect their health. Still, seafood is low in saturated fat and rich in protein...and flavor.

How healthy is the most popular seafood? What's it doing to the environment?

*The **Good for the Earth?** sections are simplified versions of recommendations from the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program. For a more comprehensive look, go to seafoodwatch.org.*

Tilapia



It's the fourth most popular seafood in the United States. Some is raised here, but most of this mild-tasting fish now comes from farms in China, followed by Indonesia, Ecuador, and Honduras.

Good for people? Modest in omega-3s (about 150 mg in 4 oz. cooked). Very low in mercury. Fed a vegetarian diet (so it's less likely to accumulate harmful chemicals).

Bad for people? A 2008 study found large amounts of arachidonic acid in farmed tilapia. Some charge that omega-6 fats like arachidonic acid cause inflammation. "But omega-6 fats don't cause inflammation or promote heart disease," says William Harris, of the University of South Dakota's Sanford School of Medicine, who chaired the American Heart Association's 2009 panel on omega-6s.

Tilapia from China and Taiwan are on an FDA watch list for illegal drug residues (see "Fishing for Seafood," p. 11). In part, that's why neither is a "best choice" (see below).

Good for the Earth?

Best choice: Tilapia that's tank-farmed in the United States or Canada or in carefully managed ponds in Ecuador.

Good alternative: Tilapia farmed in ponds in China and Taiwan.

Farmed Salmon



Americans are eating more Atlantic salmon, which is always farmed. Most of it comes from Chile, Canada, and Norway.

Good for people? Very high in omega-3s (about 2,400 mg in 4 oz. cooked). Very low in mercury.

Bad for people? In 2004, a chemical analysis of 459 samples of farmed salmon from five countries rattled seafood eaters. Most was so polluted with PCBs and dioxins that the researchers advised people to eat farmed salmon no more than once a month. The fish accumulate the industrial chemicals from the fishmeal they are fed.

Since then, the industry claims that it has been cleaning up its act by replacing some fishmeal with soy protein.

Has it worked? There's no way to tell, since independent researchers haven't done any recent testing.

In the 2004 analysis, farmed salmon from the United States, Canada, and Chile had lower levels of contaminants than farmed salmon from Northern Europe. For what it's worth, a Norwegian study found that PCB and dioxin levels in its farmed salmon fell by half from 2004 to 2011. But no one has published recent good data on farmed salmon raised elsewhere.

Good for the Earth?

Best choice: U.S. farmed salmon—or any other farmed salmon—that are raised in "recirculating aquaculture systems" or "tank systems."

Good alternative: Verlasso farmed salmon from Chile.

Avoid: Most farmed salmon from Chile, British Columbia, Scotland, and Norway, which are raised in "net pens." Why? Fish that escape from the pens can breed with wild salmon and can infect them with parasites.



Trout



Most farmed trout, unlike most farmed salmon, are raised in closed, man-made waterways that are essentially artificial streams. So trout farming doesn't raise the same environmental concerns—about feed and feces polluting the ocean, residues of antibiotics getting into the environment, and fish escaping and breeding with wild fish.

Good for people? High in omega-3s (about 1,000 mg in 4 oz. cooked). Low in mercury.

Bad for people? Farmed salmon and farmed trout are both fed fishmeal and fish oil, which come from small oily fish—like menhaden—that absorb fat-soluble pollutants like PCBs and dioxins from their environment. There have been no recent analyses of farmed trout, but there's reason to think that they're cleaner than farmed salmon. "Trout are fed lesser amounts of fishmeal and especially fish oil because they're smaller and live shorter lives," says aquaculture expert Gary Fornshell, of the University of Idaho.

Good for the Earth?

Best choice: Rainbow trout farmed in the United States. Wild lake trout from Minnesota waters of Lake Superior.

Good alternative: Wild lake trout from Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, and Canadian and Michigan waters of Lake Superior.

Avoid: Wild lake trout from Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior.

Canned Tuna



Is canned tuna safe? Only in moderation.

Good for people? Modest to high in omega-3s (150 to 300 mg in 4 oz. of canned light and about 1,000 mg in 4 oz. of canned albacore).

Bad for people? Mercury can damage nerves, leading to memory loss, irritability, and balance problems. According to the FDA, it's safe to get, on average, up to 7 micrograms of mercury a week for every 22 pounds you weigh. That works out to around 50 mcg for a 150-pound person. Four ounces of canned albacore (white) tuna averages 40 mcg of mercury; that much canned light averages 13 mcg.

Because the developing nervous system is especially sensitive to mercury, we recommend that women who are nursing, pregnant, or could become pregnant, as well as children under 55 pounds, not eat albacore tuna. Those women should limit light tuna to 2 oz. a week (1 oz. for children). Other adults can safely eat up to 3 oz. of albacore or 12 oz. of light tuna a week.

Good for the Earth?

Best choice or Good alternative: Tuna caught by trolls, poles, or FAD-free purse seines. (FADs—fish aggregating devices— attract, catch, and waste a lot of other fish.) That typically means smaller brands like Wild Planet and Raincoast Trading.

Avoid: Tuna caught with gill nets, purse seines with FADs, or most longline methods. That includes Chicken of the Sea, Bumblebee, and (sorry, Charlie) Star-Kist.

Shrimp



Shrimp is the most popular seafood in the United States. Most of it is imported from shrimp farms in Asia and Ecuador.

Good for people? Modest in omega-3s (about 100 mg in 4 oz. cooked). Very low in mercury.

Bad for people? In 2014 tests carried out in Louisiana (where domestic shrimp competes with imports), 20 of 27 samples of farmed shrimp from Asia and Ecuador showed traces of fluoroquinolones, a class of antibiotics—Cipro is one—that is banned from food here. And 25 tested positive for malachite

green, an anti-fungal compound not permitted in imported food. None of the 14 frozen U.S.-caught wild shrimp samples tested positive for illegal drug residues or malachite green.

Farmed shrimp from China, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Indonesia are on an FDA watch list for illegal drug residues (see "Fishing for Answers").

Good for the Earth?

Best choice or Good alternative: Wild shrimp caught anywhere other than Mexico or Louisiana. U.S. farmed shrimp.

Avoid: Most imported farmed shrimp.

Catfish



“U.S. farmed catfish is one of the most sustainable fish available,” says the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch program. However, the domestic industry has been battered by a growing volume of imported catfish and related fish from Asia called pangasius, basa, swai, and tra.

Good for people? Modest in omega-3s (about 100 to 250 mg in 4 oz cooked). Low in mercury. Fed a vegetarian diet (so it’s less likely to accumulate harmful chemicals).

Bad for people? The FDA has placed farmed catfish from China on a watch list for illegal residues of malachite green and fluoroquinolones. Catfish from Vietnam also made the FDA’s list for fluoroquinolone residue contamination (see “Fishing for Answers”). In part, that’s why neither is a “best choice” (see below).

Good for the Earth?

Best choice: Catfish farmed in the United States.

Good alternative: Imported farmed catfish, pangasius, basa, swai, tra, or sutchi.

Wild Salmon



“Alaska’s icy, pure waters and the abundance of natural food give Alaska Salmon unparalleled flavor,” says the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute. The downside: fresh wild salmon costs more than twice as much as farmed and is available only during the summer.

Good for people? High in omega-3s (about 1,500 mg in 4 oz. of cooked wild coho and 900 mg in cooked wild sockeye). Canned salmon, which is usually wild, has about 1,200 mg in a 4 oz. serving. Very low in mercury.

Bad for people? The 2004 analysis that found PCBs and dioxins in farmed salmon also found both in samples of wild Alaska salmon. But levels of contaminants were typically only about an eighth of those in the farmed.

Good for the Earth?

Best choice: Any wild salmon from Alaska.

Good alternative: Any wild salmon from California, Oregon, or Washington state. Wild coho from British Columbia. Any wild salmon from a Marine Stewardship Council Certified Fishery.

Fishing for Answers

Roughly 80 percent of our seafood is imported (and 40 percent of that is farm-raised), according to the Food and Drug Administration.

“Unfortunately, the FDA doesn’t have the resources to inspect more than 2 percent of seafood imports each year,” says Caroline Smith DeWaal, director of food safety at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (*Nutrition Action’s* publisher).

One problem: trace amounts of unapproved antibiotics and other drugs that foreign producers sometimes use to control disease in crowded fish pens or ponds.

“Prolonged exposure to drugs like nitrofurans, malachite green, and gentian violet could raise the risk of cancer,” notes DeWaal. “Fortunately, the levels of the drugs that are sometimes found in imported seafood are usually very low.”

Antibiotic residues pose another risk. “Any antibiotic-resistant bacteria that



Raw and unprocessed? Then check its “country of origin” label.

contaminate the seafood could increase the risk that antibiotics wouldn’t work in treating people who got sick,” adds DeWaal.

When the FDA finds repeated violations, it can issue an “Import Alert,” which allows inspectors to block shipments until companies prove that their seafood is free of illegal drug residues. Among the imports on the watch list are shrimp, catfish, and tilapia

from China and shrimp and catfish from Vietnam.

But that’s no reason to avoid seafood.

“In large long-term studies of fish intake and risk of chronic disease, the benefits of fish far outweigh any hypothetical harm for most people,” says Eric Rimm, professor of medicine at the Harvard Medical School.

To avoid seafood from particular countries, look for its “country of origin label” (COOL), which has to be displayed on all raw seafood.

Unfortunately, “processed” seafood is exempt from COOL labeling. And that includes everything from cooked to smoked to breaded to “restructured.” So you’re on your own with, among other things, fish sticks, marinated fish fillets, canned tuna and salmon, shrimp cocktail, and sushi.

Also exempt: seafood served at restaurants, bars, salad bars, and supermarket deli counters. Sigh. 🍷

Quick Café Finds

Salads, soups, & sandwiches

BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

Remember when fast food meant a burger and fries, pizza, or tacos? Remember when sandwiches were tuna, egg salad, or ham & swiss? That was so 20th century.

These days, “fast casual” restaurants offer hearty soups, substantial salads, and gourmet sandwiches, often in cozy settings with comfy seats, soothing music, Wi-Fi, and maybe even a fireplace. Here’s how to make the best of a very salty situation.

Information compiled by Paige Einstein.



Panera Bread has voluntarily listed calories on its menu boards since 2010. Bravo!

The “You Pick 2”—it includes two of five options (cup of soup, half salad, half sandwich, half mac & cheese, or one flatbread sandwich)—is a popular order at Panera’s 1,800-or-so locations. That’s why our chart lists the You-Pick-2-size sandwiches, salads, soups, and mac & cheese.



A panini-mac & cheese-baguette “You Pick 2” hovers around 1,000 calories.

& cheese-baguette You Pick 2 hits around 1,000 calories. Most sandwich-salad-baguette You Pick 2 combos hover around 750 calories.

Solution: Look for healthier dishes...and don’t forget; you can always ask for a take-home container. It’s made mostly of thin cardboard, not plastic. (Bravo, again.)

■ **Hidden Power Menu.** It’s got some of the healthiest foods at Panera, yet (except for the Chicken Hummus Bowl) they’re not on the menu board and aren’t offered as part of a You Pick 2. The Mediterranean Chicken Salad, Mediterranean Roasted Turkey Salad, and Steak Lettuce Wraps pack 27 to 37 grams of protein into just 230 to 400 calories (including the packet of olive oil that comes with the two salads). And they’re low in saturated fat (3 to 5 grams) and sodi-

um (250 to 500 mg). (Exception: the Roasted Turkey hits 780 mg—half a day’s worth—thanks in part to its olives and pepperoncini.) What’s more, there’s no white flour in sight.

How to order something from the Hidden Power Menu? Just ask for it.

■ **Salads.** Order a whole salad to rack up some veggies instead of bread. Try the Classic with

Chicken, Asian Sesame Chicken, BBQ Chicken, Thai Chicken, Fuji Apple Chicken, or the Power Chicken Hummus Bowl.

Don’t want chicken? Just drop it. Most Panera salads have enough going on without it: almonds and sesame seeds in the Asian Sesame, corn and beans in the BBQ, edamame and cashews in the Thai, and pecans, apple chips, and gorgonzola in the Fuji Apple.

Salads to skip: The Greek, with 1,200 mg of sodium (that’s olives, pepperoncini, feta, and salty dressing for you). Even a half Greek is too high. The Chicken Cobb with Avocado and the Steak & Blue Cheese, with around 650 calories and 11 or 14 grams (more than half a day’s supply) of sat fat.

■ **Panini & Sandwiches.** Not leaving without a sandwich? At least get a You Pick 2 that includes a half salad. Most whole sandwiches or panini drop 600 to 900 calories—typically 300 to 500 of them from the white bread alone—onto your lap. Ditto for an order of two flatbread sandwiches. And most come with 8 to 15 grams of sat fat and 1,000 to 2,500 mg of sodium.

In contrast, a half sandwich is closer to what many *whole* sandwiches were before restaurants started super-sizing their servings (and patrons). In fact, Panera treats each of its (smaller) flatbread sandwiches like a half sandwich. (Customers can pair one with a soup, half salad, or half mac & cheese as part of a You Pick 2.)

Try the Smoked Turkey Breast, Tuna Salad, Mediterranean Veggie, Napa Almond Chicken Salad, or Roasted Turkey & Avocado BLT. A half has only about 200 to 350 calories—150 to 250 if you ask for it on the (part) whole-grain bread. All are low in sat fat, though not sodium (300 to 700 mg with whole grain).

Reminder: Whatever you order, you can drop—and often swap—any ingredient in



Ask for the impressive Power Menu. All but this 270-calorie Chicken Hummus Bowl are hidden. Time to unhide them.



Numbers are for You Pick 2-size salads, sandwiches, and soups. Power Menu and Broth Bowls come in just one size. Foods are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium.

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Hidden Power Menu (full size)				
Steak Lettuce Wraps	230	4	250	28
Mediterranean Roasted Turkey Salad	300	3	780	27
Mediterranean Chicken Salad	400	5	480	37
Broth Bowls (full size)				
Soba Noodle with Edamame Blend	370	1	1,340	17
Lentil Quinoa with Egg	380	3	1,310	19
Soba Noodle with Chicken	390	2	1,340	31
Lentil Quinoa with Chicken	410	2	1,390	34
Salads (half size, with dressing)				
Classic	80	1	70	1
Power Chicken Hummus Bowl	140	1	250	13
Classic with Chicken	150	1	160	14
Caesar	160	4	240	5
Greek	180	4	600	4
Asian Sesame Chicken	210	2	250	16
Chicken Caesar	220	4	330	17
BBQ Chicken	230	2	280	15
Thai Chicken	240	2	450	20
Greek with Chicken	240	4	690	17
Fuji Apple Chicken	280	4	310	16
Chicken Cobb with Avocado	320	6	520	21
Steak & Blue Cheese	340	7	470	18
Panini & Sandwiches (half size, as served unless noted)				
Smoked Turkey Breast on whole grain	140	0	700	14
Mediterranean Veggie on whole grain	160	2	420	7
Tuna Salad on whole grain	190	1	500	13
Smoked Turkey Breast	220	0	890	16
Roasted Turkey & Avocado BLT on whole grain	220	2	440	19
Napa Almond Chicken Salad on whole grain	240	2	280	12
Roasted Turkey & Avocado BLT	250	2	480	19
Tuna Salad	260	2	550	14
Mediterranean Veggie	280	2	720	10
Smoked Ham & Swiss	290	5	1,120	21
Classic Grilled Cheese	290	7	720	13
Napa Almond Chicken Salad	340	2	570	15

Panera's sandwiches and salads. Vegetarian? Axe the meat or chicken. Most sandwiches have cheese.

■ **Soups.** They're all too salty, but at least the Black Bean, Garden Vegetable with Pesto, and Turkey Chili aren't loaded with cream, cheese, or white flour. The Creamy Tomato, on the other hand, delivers 330 calories and half a day's sat fat. You might as well eat half a cup of sour cream for lunch.

■ **Broth Bowls.** The new Lentil Quinoa Broth Bowl includes kale, spinach, tomatoes, and brown rice. The Soba Noodle has spinach, cabbage, mushrooms, and onions. (Its buckwheat noodles have more white flour than buckwheat.) After you

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Smokehouse Turkey Panini	360	6	1,300	27
Sierra Turkey	390	4	950	20
Frontega Chicken Panini	390	4	1,040	23
Bacon Turkey Bravo	390	5	1,460	26
Asiago Steak	400	9	670	25
Chipotle Chicken Panini	420	6	1,090	27
Tomato & Mozzarella Panini	430	6	860	16
Fontina Grilled Cheese	430	13	770	21
Steak & White Cheddar Panini	480	8	910	26
Italian Combo	490	8	1,420	29
Flatbread Sandwiches (1)				
Mediterranean Chicken	310	5	550	8
Turkey Cranberry	310	6	470	13
Southwestern Chicken	380	6	550	9
BBQ Chicken	380	8	960	12
Soups (8 oz. cup)				
Chicken Noodle	80	0	960	6
Garden Vegetable with Pesto	90	0	560	3
Black Bean	150	0	750	11
Turkey Chili	190	1	710	14
Bistro French Onion	200	5	1,150	8
Cream of Chicken & Wild Rice	210	6	980	6
Broccoli Cheddar	220	9	930	9
Baked Potato	230	9	820	5
Creamy Tomato	330	12	510	6
New England Clam Chowder	480	27	680	6
Pastas (full size unless noted)				
Mac & Cheese, half size	490	13	1,020	17
Chicken Sorrentina	780	10	2,600	36
Tortellini Alfredo	790	18	2,430	29
Chicken Tortellini Alfredo	840	19	2,930	40
Pesto Sacchetti	930	13	1,570	29
Mac & Cheese	980	26	2,030	34
Sides				
Apple	80	0	0	0
Kettle-Cooked Potato Chips	150	1	170	2
Sprouted Whole Grain Roll	170	0	360	7
Baguette	180	0	440	6
Soft Dinner Roll	190	2	300	6

Daily Limits (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams. **Saturated Fat:** 20 grams. **Daily Protein Target:** 75 grams.

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

add chicken to either bowl, egg to the Lentil, or edamame to the Soba, you're up to only about 400 calories. And the protein ranges from a decent 20-or-so grams (edamame or egg) to a great 30-or-so grams (chicken). The downside to both: the 1,350 mg jolt of sodium, in part from the "soy-miso broth."

■ **Pastas.** Who needs 800 to 1,000 calories' worth of cheese-and-cream-coated white flour laced with 10 to 26 grams of sat fat and 1,600 to 3,000 mg of sodium? Pasta may be good for Panera's bottom line, but for yours? Not so much.

■ **Sides.** The apple's a no brainer. The baguette slice and the rolls are no better than the chips.





Einstein Bros Bagels has 720 outlets nationwide. You can also find some of its menu items (marked with an “N” in our chart, though the numbers may vary slightly) at Noah’s New York Bagels, which is owned by the same company.

Einstein’s menu board lists “Smart Choices” that have less than 385 calories (though some are quite high in sodium). But only the website (and our chart) has other numbers.

■ **Sandwiches.** Most of the Signature sandwiches and Panini hover around 550 to 750 calories, and dump roughly 10 grams (half a day’s) sat fat and 1,200 to 2,200 milligrams (a full day’s) sodium into your arteries. That puts them in Big Mac territory.

Instead, try one of the two Thintastic Lunch sandwiches. The Chicken Pesto and the Club (without the bacon) are cream cheese-free and come on a 160-calorie Thintastic bagel. (Ask for the chicken on a *whole wheat* one; the club already comes that way.) You end up with around 350 calories and just 4 grams of sat fat. Sodium—750 mg for the chicken and 1,120 mg for the club—is high. Sigh.

The chain’s Deli sandwiches also have less sat fat (3 to 6 grams). Try an Albacore Tuna Salad or a Chicken Salad. Each has about 500 calories and 650 mg of sodium. Get them on the (all whole-grain) 9-Grain bagel instead of the (part whole-grain) multi-grain bread. Better yet, lose 100 calories with a Whole Wheat Thintastic bagel.

■ **Salads.** Why not replace that bagel with veggies? Einstein’s salads keep the calories to a cool 290 to 390. Our pick: the Strawberry Chicken. Its sodium (350 mg) beats the Chicken Caesar or the Chicken Club (around 900 mg).



Who needs bagels? Fill up on a Strawberry Chicken Chopped Salad instead.

■ **Soups.** The hearty 260-calorie Turkey Chili has enough beans and turkey to give each 14 oz. bowl 8 grams of fiber and 20 grams of protein. Too bad it has 1,500 mg of sodium. Yikes.

■ **Sides.** Why bother with chips or potato salad, when you can have a fruit cup with fresh pineapple, strawberries, honeydew, and grapes?



You can cut 100 calories by getting any sandwich on a Whole Wheat Thintastic bagel. Foods are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium.

Salads (with dressing)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Chicken Caesar ^N	290	4	860	22
Strawberry Chicken ^N	320	2	350	16
Chicken Club	390	7	910	17

Thintastic Lunch Sandwiches

Chicken Pesto ^N	340	5	750	25
Club ^N	370	3	1,120	28

Deli Sandwiches

Albacore Tuna Salad	480	3	620	23
Turkey & Cheddar	480	4	1,450	31
Ham & Swiss	510	6	1,960	30
Chicken Salad ^N	540	3	670	27

Signature Sandwiches

Veg Out	430	8	690	13
Nova Lox ^N	460	10	1,140	26
Tasty Turkey	540	11	1,310	32
Turkey Club Mex	560	7	1,730	34
Honey-Glazed Smoked Salmon	560	10	1,220	23
Turkey, Bacon & Avocado	680	7	1,660	31
Bavarian Chicken ^N	750	13	1,740	38
Napa Valley Chicken ^N	760	12	1,250	32

Panini

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Spinach & Artichoke Chicken ^N	640	14	1,670	44
BBQ Chicken	680	10	2,080	41
Italian Chicken ^N	720	11	1,870	45
Turkey Club ^N	770	12	2,230	42

Favorites

Turkey Melt	500	8	1,560	36
Bagel Pizza with pepperoni ^N	520	11	1,330	27
Original Bagel Dog ^N	610	11	1,620	22
Asiago Bagel Dog ^N	620	12	1,650	23

Soups (14 oz. bowl)

Chicken Noodle ^N	170	1	1,550	10
Turkey Chili ^N	260	2	1,500	20
Broccoli Cheddar ^N	470	19	1,910	21

Sides

Fresh Fruit ^N	120	0	20	2
Lay’s Oven Baked Original Potato Crisps ^N	130	0	150	2
Potato Salad ^N	160	3	360	1
SunChips Harvest Cheddar ^N	210	2	310	3
Lay’s Classic Potato Chips ^N	240	2	250	3

^N Also available at Noah’s New York Bagels.

Daily Limits (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 milligrams.

Saturated Fat: 20 grams. **Daily Protein Target:** 75 grams.

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

Corner Bakery Cafe, with 182 locations, puts calories on its menus. (Yesss!!) Its Corner Combos let you pair smaller-size sandwiches, soups, pastas, and salads (though you're limited to mixed greens or Caesar unless you get a Signature Salad Combo). Our chart lists those smaller portions, because that's your best bet if you don't get a Trio of salads or a (entrée-size) Signature Salad.



grapes, and goat cheese, which add up to 470 calories and 520 mg of sodium, even with all the pomegranate vinaigrette. (You'll get about 3 tablespoons of dressing with the smaller, cafe-size salads, which deliver around 400 calories. Too bad the only combo that includes them has salty soup.)

■ **The Trio.** Create your own "Trio" by picking three Specialty Salads plus field greens. (Ignore the salty-soup-plus-salads option.) We're talking *interesting* salads like Toasted Sesame Kale, Quinoa & Pico, and Southwest Avocado. Each has roughly 100 to 250 calories and little or no sat fat (except the Mozzarella Tomato Arugula, with 5 grams). The sodium (around 300 to 500 mg each) can add up—unless the salt-free Seasonal Fruit Medley is one of your three.

But at least your plate is packed with potassium-rich fruits and veggies. The Tuna or D.C. Chicken Salad bumps up the protein, but also the calories (by 250) and sodium (by 530 mg).

■ **Signature Salads.** With one exception, the entrée-size salads have 700 to 900 calories and a load of sodium, largely because they come with about 5 tablespoons of dressing. (If you order a Signature, use half.)

The stand-out: the Spinach Sweet Crisp. It's loaded with spinach, strawberries, oranges,



Half the dressing is plenty for Corner Bakery's salads. The best: Spinach Sweet Crisp.

■ **Sandwiches.** Your best sandwich bet is a Corner Combo with half a sandwich and mixed greens. Try a Mom's Tuna Salad or Grilled Chicken, or a Signature D.C. Chicken Salad. The sodium is high, but others are far worse. A *half* Ham or Turkey Pretzel has 1,800 mg (more than a day's worth).

■ **Pastas.** Even a cafe-size Pesto Cavatappi, Chicken Carbonara, or Mac & Three Cheese pumps 500 or 600 calories and 15 grams of sat fat (¾ of a day's worth) plus about 1,000 mg of sodium into a bowl of white flour. Move on.

■ **Soups.** A modest 10 oz. cup sends 1,000 to 1,500 mg of sodium to your unsuspecting arteries. The Cheddar Broccoli, Lemon Chicken Orzo, and Loaded Baked Potato pile on 17 grams of sat fat plus around 400 calories. Get the soup in a bread bowl and you're up to 1,400 calories. Carb overload!

■ **Sides.** Skip the chips, roll, and garlic bread. Ask for baby carrots instead. 🥕



Numbers are for half sandwiches, cafe-size salads and pastas, and 10 oz. cups of soup that come as part of Corner Combos. Foods are ranked from least to most calories, then saturated fat, then sodium.

The Trio Specialty Salads (choose 3)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Seasonal Fruit Medley	70	0	10	1
Asian Edamame	90	1	560	4
Quinoa & Pico	110	0	280	2
Toasted Sesame Kale	110	1	390	3
Cavatappi Pasta Salad	150	2	380	6
Mozzarella Tomato Arugula	160	5	240	6
Southwest Avocado	220	3	300	3
D.C. Chicken Salad	250	2	530	14
Tuna Salad	260	3	520	20

Signature Salads (cafe size, with dressing)

Spinach Sweet Crisp	240	3	270	6
Asian Wonton	250	1	1,050	20
Caesar	350	6	680	9
Kale Caesar	360	6	680	9
Chopped	390	8	1,160	22
Harvest	400	6	740	11
Santa Fe Ranch	410	5	1,100	21

Mom's Sandwiches (half size, without condiments)

Smoked Ham	210	3	1,150	14
Smoked Turkey	230	0	960	17
Grilled Chicken	250	0	630	22
Tuna Salad	310	2	620	18

Signature Sandwiches (half size)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)
Chicken Pesto	300	1	980	20
D.C. Chicken Salad	310	1	770	14
Tomato Mozzarella	310	7	840	13
Ham or Turkey Pretzel ¹	330	4	1,760	18
Uptown Turkey	360	3	1,350	21

Grilled Panini (half size)

California Grille	330	6	650	14
Chicken Pomodoro	380	6	1,070	24
Club Panini	390	7	1,460	21

Homemade Soups (10 oz. cup)

Mom's Chicken Noodle	140	2	1,080	8
Tuscan White Bean	180	1	1,020	7
Cheddar Broccoli	360	16	1,270	12
Lemon Chicken Orzo	370	17	1,110	10
Loaded Baked Potato	400	17	1,020	13

Hearty Pastas (cafe size)

Mac & Three Cheese	530	16	760	21
Pesto Cavatappi	600	14	770	27
Chicken Carbonara	620	16	1,050	33

Sides

Carrots	40	0	70	1
Focaccia Roll or Garlic Bread ¹	110	1	240	3
Bakery Chips	150	1	140	2

¹ Average. **Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Sodium:** 1,500 mg. **Saturated Fat:** 20 grams. **Daily Protein Target:** 75 grams.

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RIGHT STUFF

TOFU TO GO



Tofu can stand in for meat in stir-fries, salads, sandwiches, and other dishes. The problem: it's up to you to give it some flavor...or at least it *used* to be.

"Preparing tofu has never been easier," says Nasoya's website. "Our NEW TofuBaked is marinated and baked, ready to enjoy hot or cold!"

True, you could always buy your own tofu, drain it, pat it dry, marinate it, then bake it. Or not.

Each 2 oz. piece of Nasoya organic TofuBaked delivers 8 grams of protein and 10 percent of a day's calcium for just 80 or 90 calories.

And the company doesn't overdo the salt. Both the **Sesame Ginger** (200 milligrams) and the **Teriyaki** (240 mg) have far less sodium than a 2 oz. serving of most major brands of sliced turkey, ham, or other lunch meat (typically 500 to 700 mg).

Bonus: Tofu is made of soy, so it isn't just low in saturated fat. It's also a source of the unsaturated fat that helps lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

And it's plant protein, so it goes easier on the planet (and animals) than meat.

How to turn TofuBaked into dinner? Try stir-frying some with snow peas, red bell pepper, and mushrooms. Or add some to a chopped salad of napa cabbage, avocado, and tomato with a sesame vinaigrette. Or tuck some into a lettuce wrap with shredded cabbage and carrots.

You could even eat it right out of the package. Who knew tofu could be a grab-and-go snack?

nasoya.com—(800) 848-2769

FOOD PORN

BIG FAT BREADS

Romano's Macaroni Grill seems to be targeting an overlooked minority: the underweight. Why else would it call its new pizzas **Fatbreads**?

"The anti-flatbread, for crust lovers," says the menu. "Fat on crust. Fat on toppings." And fat on your ribs (or thereabouts).

Expect about 1,400 calories in the **Smashed Meatball** ("smashed beef and veal meatballs, fresh mozzarella, fonduta, parmesan") or the **Farmhouse** ("butcher-chopped bacon, prosciutto, pepperoni, sautéed spinach, fresh mozzarella, fonduta, parmesan"). The innocent-sounding **Margherita** and the **Pesto Primavera** each tops 1,200 calories. You'll be in plus sizes before you know it!

And it's not just carbs you'll be converting to an extra layer of *you*. The Pesto Primavera has nearly a full day's saturated fat (17 grams), while the others (23 to 28 grams) steal from tomorrow's allowance. Between your newfound belly fat and each Fatbread's one to two days' supply of sodium (2,000 to 3,000 mg), your blood pressure will reach new heights.

Would you order 1 ½ cups of white flour topped with half a stick of butter? Well, you pretty much just did.

True, you could get a lighter dish like the Warm Spinach & Shrimp Salad (370 calories) or the Bibb & Bleu Salad with shrimp (550 calories).

But if you eat like *that*, how're you going to beef up for the beach? You've got to put some meat on those bones. Okay, the "meat" will be fat, not muscle. But isn't that what the menu promised?

macaronigrill.com—(713) 366-7500

dish OF THE MONTH



Yogurt-Tahini Sauce

For a knock-your-socks-off sauce for grilled chicken or vegetables or dip for crudités, whisk together ½ cup 0% greek yogurt, ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, 2 Tbs. tahini, 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice, 1 finely minced small clove garlic, and up to ½ tsp. salt. Makes 1 cup.

quicktip

If you're buying eggs, place them in your grocery cart away from the raw produce, just in case any *Salmonella* bacteria are lurking on the egg carton. It's best to keep the carton away from raw meats as well.