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 CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Eat Smart

Which foods are good for what

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Remember when grapefruit was supposed to melt away the pounds and oat bran (even in potato chips or beer) was a magic anti-cholesterol bullet? Remember when prunes were a boon for regularity? (Okay, that's still true.)

Some foods gain a reputation for protecting against disease, thanks to clever marketing or popular diet books or because your grandmother said so. In fact, it's rare that a single food can help. But some foods—or classes of food—*can* make a difference. And they're not necessarily those with the big ad budgets. Here's a rundown of which foods do what.

Continued on page 3.

CSPI • 1971-2011

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MEMO FROM MFJ

Behind the Scenes



I feel a little guilty every time a new issue of *Nutrition Action* comes off the presses. There's my picture and my thoughts on page 2, providing sort of a conversation (one-sided though it might be) between readers and *Nutrition Action*. In fact, it is my colleagues who do the great bulk of the work in putting together this publication. I thought I'd bring you backstage to meet some key, but unsung, staff members.

Next to me, Bonnie Liebman has worked at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (*Nutrition Action's* publisher) longer than anyone. She joined us in 1977 after earning a master's degree in nutrition science at Cornell University. For 30+ years, while raising three daughters, Bonnie has written most of our major articles on diet and disease, our Quick Studies page, and (with Jayne Hurley) our brand-name ratings.

When we want to delve into a new topic, we often turn to David Schardt (another Cornell alumnus). He's been terrific at getting to the bottom of scientific controversies. He has written especially about dietary supplements—giving them credit when evidence supports their effectiveness, but, more often than not, skewering them because their advertising hype is based on lousy or no research. His three kids and interest in refereeing basketball and playing baseball have kept him very busy in the nearly 20 years he has written for us.

Our "food maven" since 1988 has been

dietitian Jayne Hurley. She first gained fame in the 1990s when she conducted our groundbreaking studies of Chinese, Italian, and other restaurant foods, which led to our book *Restaurant Confidential*. That work eventually led to our campaign for the federal law that should put calories on menus and menu boards at chain restaurants next year. Jayne brings her encyclopedic knowledge of fresh, processed, and restaurant foods to our brand-name ratings, Right Stuffs, and Food Porns.

Pulling everything together is editor-in-chief Stephen Schmidt. Since 1988, he has added

sparkle and humor to the publication. Though he's not a scientist, he has a knack for ensuring that articles are clear and accurate. As a proofreader and grammarian, he is unsurpassed. (Have you ever seen a typo in *Nutrition Action*?)

Along with those staffers, we rely on Kate Sherwood to

create healthy and exquisite recipes and on Jorge Bach to expertly design and illustrate each issue. We also couldn't do without Deane Edelman, who has ably answered readers' inquiries for 15 years, or Emily Caras and Paige Einstein, who help gather information for articles and ensure the accuracy of our brand-name ratings.

We also thank our prestigious Scientific Advisory Board and other researchers who offer their time and expertise. For us all, it's a privilege to bring you each issue of *Nutrition Action*.



Nutrition Action's Jayne Hurley (left), David Schardt (seated), Stephen Schmidt, and Bonnie Liebman.

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Eat Smart



Which foods are good for what

Wheat bran and prunes are good for regularity. But they're the exceptions. Most foods don't have a unique feature that prevents or cures disease.

It's usually not a single food, but a class of foods or an entire diet, that protects against (or promotes) a disease. It's not just spinach, but all lutein-rich green leafy vegetables, that may protect your eyes. And it's not just bananas or other potassium-rich foods, but a DASH diet (which is rich in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat and added sugars), that may lower your blood pressure.

Here's what we know about which foods lower (or raise) the risk of some key health problems.

Lowering Cholesterol

"Can help reduce cholesterol," promise boxes of Honey Nut Cheerios. "Proven to help reduce cholesterol," claim cartons of Minute Maid Heart Wise Orange Juice.

What gives you the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to lowering LDL ("bad") cholesterol? Cheerios gets the most air time, but the soluble fiber in oats isn't exactly Lipitor.

"The soluble fiber in any single food has only a modest impact on LDL cholesterol," explains Alice Lichtenstein, director of the Cardiovascular Nutrition Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston.

"However, if you're eating beans, fruits, vegetables, oats, and other foods with soluble fiber instead of burgers, pizza, and shakes, it adds up to a sizeable benefit."

The plant sterols that are added to some juices, margarines, and yogurts make a bigger dent. "There's good evidence that they decrease LDL cholesterol levels on average by about 10 percent," notes Lichtenstein. "That's very significant. You get maximal lowering with about two grams a day. With three grams a day, you don't get much more."

But neither soluble fiber nor plant sterols matters the most. "The important thing is when saturated or trans fat is replaced by unsaturated fat," says Lichtenstein, who is vice chair of the Expert Panel

that is now updating the National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute's *Clinical Guidelines on the Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults*.¹

"Polyunsaturated fats win out over monounsaturated fats because they lower LDL a bit more," explains Lichtenstein. "But that's fine tuning."

That means replacing butter with high-



Oils, most salad dressings, and mayo lower cholesterol, but you'll need to eat less of something else to compensate for the calories (120 per tablespoon of oil).

poly oils like soybean, corn, and sunflower or with high-mono oils like canola, olive, and safflower. It also means replacing red meat and cheese with poultry and fish.

However, you don't want to swap a steak for a high-carb dish like a plate of pasta.

"If you're going to decrease saturated and trans fat, you don't want to substitute

carbohydrates, because they can raise triglycerides," notes Lichtenstein.

When triglycerides go up, HDL ("good") cholesterol typically goes down. "It's a sort of ying-yang metabolically," she says. People with high triglycerides and low HDL have a higher risk of heart disease.²

"Carbohydrates are more likely to raise triglycerides in some people than in others," adds Lichtenstein. "People who are overweight tend to be more carb-sensitive."

Does that apply to *all* carbs?

"No one has done the ultimate study," says Lichtenstein. "People assume that whole grains are not as bad as refined grains, but the literature is very thin."

In any case, it's smarter to cut back on sodas, sweets, and refined grains than on healthier carbs.

"You'd hate to see somebody decrease fruits and vegetables, beans, and non-fat dairy because of their carbs," she says.

"But you can prepare the beans with some oil or put salad dressing on vegetables."

Just don't get carried away, says Lichtenstein. The key word is "replace."

"Just pouring some soybean oil over a hot fudge sundae is not going to help," she cautions. "You need to make sure the oil is replacing an equal number of calories from some other food."

Otherwise, you'll gain weight. "That will increase LDL, decrease HDL, prompt insulin resistance, and increase blood pressure," she points out. "Since the majority of people are already overweight, that's the last thing you want to do."

The same holds true for margarine with added sterols. "You can't just decide, 'I'm going to use this great margarine to lower my cholesterol, so boy, I can really spread it on,'" she says. "That's the concern I always have when we say that any food is good for you."

Nuts are rich in polyunsaturated fats, but they pose the same problem. "People think of them as add-ons, and that's the way they're advertised," says Lichtenstein. "Throw some on your salad, throw them

>>>>>



Leafy greens like spinach are rich in lutein, the major pigment in the retina and lens of your eyes.

in your yogurt, throw them in your cereal in the morning.”

But just a quarter cup of most nuts has 150 to 230 calories.

“They’re extremely calorie-dense. So pouring some out of a bottle, especially if they’re salted, you have to be very careful.”

What’s worst for your cholesterol? Both saturated and trans fat.

“I’m not willing to say one is worse than the other because the amount of saturated fat you get in foods like meat, cheese, cream, and butter is much higher than the amount of trans you get in partially hydrogenated oils,” says Lichtenstein. “If you directly compared 10 grams of each, the trans fat would be worse, but that’s not what happens in food.”

In recent years, much of the trans fat in supermarket foods has disappeared. But it still shows up in some pie crusts, microwave popcorns, frozen pizzas, biscuits, margarines, and cookies. And it’s still in all the major brands of frosting.

And restaurant foods—from some pastries, pies, and cookies to some fried potatoes, fried chicken, and fried fish—still have trans because there are no Nutrition Facts labels to spill the beans.

“These cupcakes that are popping up in stores may be a good poster child for bad fats,” says Lichtenstein. “It doesn’t matter if they’re made with butter or partially hydrogenated oils. Both are bad.”

And those bad fats come with refined flour and sugar. “The cupcakes look like they’re half frosting,” she notes. “And they’re a concentrated source of calories.”

Protecting Eyes

What’s good for your eyes is good for the rest of you. “Eat a variety and abundance of colorful plant foods,” advises Julie Mares, professor of ophthalmology at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health.

But what if you had to single out one group of foods? “At the top of my list are dark leafy greens,” says Mares. That means spinach, kale, collards, and Swiss chard. Peas, broccoli, and other green vegetables may also help.

That’s because dark leafy greens are rich in lutein and its cousin, zeaxanthin (see “Seeing Lutein”). “They’re the predominant carotenoids in both the lens and the retina, and specifically in the cone-rich area of the macula,” says Mares. “That’s the part of the retina that’s used to see fine detail, like reading a pill bottle or newspaper.”

Age-related macular degeneration is the major cause of blindness in older people. And the lens is where cataracts form.

“By age 75, half of us will either have a visually significant cataract or have already had one extracted,” says Mares. “It’s the number-one cause of poor vision among people aged 65 to 74.”

A number of studies have found a lower risk of cataracts and advanced macular degeneration in people who consume more lutein and zeaxanthin (see “See Food,” May 2009).^{3,4}

“There’s strong, compelling evidence for a potential protective effect of these carotenoids,” notes Mares. But it’s not a done deal. Something else in leafy greens could

explain their link to healthy eyes.

“They’re nutritional powerhouses,” explains Mares. “They’ve got gobs of antioxidants.”

Another possibility: “Lutein may be a marker for people who eat healthy plant-rich diets,” she suggests. And something else about those diets—or the people who eat them—may explain their lower risk of eye disease.

Second on Mares’s list of possible eye protectors: “I would add oily fish.” That means foods like salmon, sardines, and mackerel.

“There is a strong, consistent body of evidence that people who eat fish of this type are less likely to have macular degeneration,” she notes.⁵ “People are jumping to the conclusion that it’s their omega-3s that matter, but it may also be other things, like their vitamin D or selenium or both.”

What might boost your risk of cataracts and macular degeneration, other than smoking and excess sunlight?

“Refined sugars and starches,” offers Mares. “The most compelling reason is that they’re strongly associated with

poor diets,” she explains. In other words, their empty calories replace nutrient-rich foods.

For example, “If you had one 500-calorie Dunkin’ Donuts blueberry muffin a day in place of nutrient-dense foods, the muffin would reduce your lutein and zeaxanthin every day to 75 percent of what it would be otherwise.” You’d also get less of the vitamins and minerals that are in the healthier foods that you gave up.

“It’s not that

Seeing Lutein

Looking for lutein to help your eyes? Start here.

Vegetables & Fruits (½ cup, vegetables cooked, unless noted)	Lutein + Zeaxanthin (mg)
Kale	11.9
Spinach	10.2
Swiss chard	9.6
Collard greens	7.3
Spinach (1 cup raw)	3.7
Peas, frozen	1.9
Broccoli	1.2
Romaine lettuce (1 cup raw)	1.1
Brussels sprouts	1.0
Zucchini	1.0
Asparagus	0.7
Corn	0.6
Green beans	0.4
Iceberg lettuce (1 cup raw)	0.2
Nectarine (1)	0.2
Orange (1)	0.2

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

refined sugars or white bread are bad," adds Mares. "It's that they go along with a reduced intake of many nutrients. So in my mind, they're anti-vitamins."

And if you ate the 500-calorie muffin—or bagel or scone or cupcake or whatever—in addition to your ordinary diet, you'd gain weight. "Obesity leads to the inflammatory and oxidative stress that also increases your risk of eye disease," says Mares. "That's absolutely a problem."

Dodging Colon Cancer

"Milk probably reduces colorectal cancer risk," concluded the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research in May.⁶ (The WCRF and AICR periodically convene a panel of scientists to review the scientific evidence on lifestyle and cancer.)

However, they added, "AICR does not make a recommendation to consume more dairy foods because the evidence for overall cancer risk remains unclear."

Back story: In 2007, the AICR cautioned that diets high in calcium (at least 1,500 milligrams a day) might raise the risk of prostate cancer (see "Dairy: Hero or Villain?" Jul./Aug. 2011). Yet prostate cancer is not a worry for all of us, needless to say. And the evidence on colorectal cancer is consistent.

"Through 2010, 16 of 17 cohort studies found a decreased risk in people with a higher calcium intake," notes Amanda Cross, an investigator in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology & Genetics at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland.

Similarly, a meta-analysis of 19 studies found a lower risk of colon cancer in people who consume more milk.⁷ (An 8 oz. glass of milk has 300 mg of calcium, so people who consume more dairy tend to get more calcium.)

What's more, when researchers gave calcium (1,200 mg a day) to people with a history of colon polyps—which can turn into tumors—they were 20 percent less likely to get new polyps than similar people who were given a placebo.⁸ And the calcium takers still had a lower risk of polyps five years after the trial stopped.⁹

How might milk or calcium protect the colon? "It may lower cell proliferation"

in the lining of the colon, says Cross. "Increased proliferation can elevate cancer risk."

The AICR also decided that "foods containing dietary fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans, reduce risk of colorectal cancer." (Note that the statement doesn't apply to the inulin, maltodextrin, polydextrose, wheat fiber, oat fiber, and other isolated fibers that companies add to foods so that they can make "high fiber" claims.)

However, when the Polyp Prevention Trial told people with a history of colon polyps to eat less fat and more whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables, they had no fewer new polyps.¹⁰ And in the Wheat Bran Fiber Trial, people who were



Dairy foods—or the calcium they contain—may lower the risk of colon cancer.

told to eat a wheat bran cereal had no fewer new polyps than those who were told to eat a low-fiber cereal.¹¹

"It's possible that their fiber intake didn't increase enough," says Cross. (The wheat bran group ate 28 grams of fiber per day, while the control group ate 18 grams.)

Her research focuses on the potential harm from red meat (beef, pork, and lamb) and processed meats (like ham, bacon, pastrami, salami, hot dogs, and sausages), each of which the AICR calls a "convincing" cause of colon cancer.

"The recommendation from the WCRF and AICR is to limit red meat to 18 ounces per week and to avoid processed meats,"

notes Cross, who was a reviewer for the AICR's 2011 report.

How might they harm the colon?

"Meat is a source of heterocyclic amines, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and *N*-nitroso compounds," explains Cross. "All have been shown to induce tumors in animal models."

The first two (HCAs and PAHs) can show up in any meat, poultry, or seafood. "They're formed when meat is cooked well done by high-temperature methods like barbecuing," says Cross.

"The *N*-nitroso compounds are formed in processed meats that are made with nitrites or nitrates," she adds. "But they can also form within the body after consuming any red meat."

Red meats are worse than poultry or fish, possibly because meats contain more iron that's bound to the hemoglobin in blood (see "The Real Cost of Red Meat," June 2009).¹² "Heme iron can increase the formation of *N*-nitroso compounds," says Cross.

"If a person eats 3.5 ounces of red meat every day (24.5 ounces per week), their risk of colorectal cancer will be 17 percent higher than someone who eats no red meat," noted the AICR. Doubling the amount of meat would double the risk. But processed meats are worse.

"If a person eats 3.5 ounces of processed meat every day," said the AICR, "their risk of colorectal cancer will be 36 percent higher than someone who eats no processed meat."

Staying Regular

What's the best food for staying regular?

"Wheat bran is at the top of the list, followed by other brans like rye, corn, and oat," says Joanne Slavin, professor of food science and nutrition at the University of Minnesota.

That's because much of the fiber in wheat bran—celluloses and hemicelluloses—survives the trip through your gut. "Probably half is still there at the end," explains Slavin. "And they bind to water, so they have the most effect on stool weight."

But all wheat brans are not alike. "The coarser ones increase stool weight more," says Slavin. "If you grind bran up into



Picking Potassium

Few Americans get the 4,700 milligrams a day of potassium that experts recommend. One strategy: load up on fruits and vegetables. That way, you can eat bigger servings—the ones in our chart are small—without piling on the calories.

Potassium	Calories	% IOM*
Clams (4 oz. cooked)	170	15
Beet greens (½ cup cooked)	20	14
Yellowfin tuna or Halibut (4 oz. cooked) ¹	160	14
Pacific cod (4 oz. cooked)	120	12
Swiss chard (½ cup cooked)	20	10
Acorn squash (½ cup cooked)	55	10
Sweet potato with skin (½ cup cooked)	90	10
Lima beans (½ cup cooked)	110	10
Edamame, shelled (½ cup cooked)	130	10
Wild Coho salmon (4 oz. cooked)	160	10
Spinach (½ cup cooked)	20	9
Tomato sauce (½ cup)	30	9
Fat-free or Low-fat plain yogurt (6 oz.) ¹	100	9
Banana (1)	105	9
Orange juice (1 cup)	120	9
Farmed Atlantic salmon (4 oz. cooked)	235	9
Cantaloupe (¼)	45	8
Dried apricots (6)	80	8
Fat-free or Low-fat milk (1 cup) ¹	90	8
Kidney beans or Lentils (½ cup cooked) ¹	115	8
Navy or Pinto beans (½ cup cooked) ¹	125	8
Tomato paste (2 Tbs.)	25	7
Baked potato with skin (½ cup cooked)	55	7
Great Northern beans (½ cup cooked)	105	7
Prunes (5)	105	7
Avocado (½)	115	7
Low-fat fruit yogurt (6 oz.)	170	7
Pistachios (¼ cup)	180	7
Mushrooms (½ cup cooked)	20	6
Tomato (1)	20	6
Beets (½ cup cooked)	35	6
Butternut squash (½ cup cooked)	40	6
Peach or Nectarine (1) ¹	60	6
Raisins (¼ cup)	110	6
Coffee (16 oz.)	5	5
Brussels sprouts (½ cup cooked)	30	5
Artichoke hearts (½ cup cooked)	45	5
Spinach (1 cup raw)	5	4
Grapes (1 cup)	60	4
Fat-free plain Greek yogurt (6 oz.)	90	4
Apple (1)	95	4
Boston or Romaine lettuce (1 cup raw) ¹	10	3

* Percent of the daily intake (4,700 milligrams) recommended by the Institute of Medicine (IOM). ¹Average.

Sources: USDA and manufacturers.

smaller particles, it doesn't have as much of an effect."

Stool weight is a better way to gauge a food's impact on regularity than transit time—the time it takes for food to go from one end of the GI tract to the other.

"Transit time is difficult to measure, and it doesn't tell you much because most people are in the 24-to-48-hour normal range," explains Slavin.

After brans come beans. "Beans have far more fiber than fruits or vegetables," she notes. "Some have 6 or 7 grams of fiber in a half cup." A serving of most fruits or vegetables has only 2 or 3 grams of fiber. "That's because they're mostly water."

What's lowest on Slavin's list? "White fibers that are purified, like pectin and inulin." Fiber One Yogurt, Kellogg's Fiber Plus Bars, and other "high fiber" bars get much of their fiber from inulin.

"The purified fibers are pretty much all broken down by the end," explains Slavin. "There's zero fiber left in fecal samples, so they don't have a big role in increasing stool weight."

Wheat bran generates 5 grams of fecal weight for every gram of fiber you consume, while oat, corn, and rye bran generate 3 or 4 grams, says Slavin. Fruit and vegetable fiber yields about 2½ grams, but each gram of inulin or pectin yields only about 1 gram of fecal weight.

The isolated fibers "generate some microflora that binds to water, but it's much less than what you get from wheat bran," says Slavin.

Worse yet, isolated fibers cause more gas. "With wheat bran, some of the fiber is fermented, but it happens slowly throughout the colon," notes Slavin. "Fibers like inulin are completely broken down really quickly high in the colon, so they cause more intestinal gas and bloating."

What about those old standbys, prunes and prune juice? "Prunes absolutely work," says Slavin. In a pilot study she never published, stool



To stay regular, go for bran, beans, and whole grains. Don't expect all "high-fiber" foods to help.

frequency increased in 10 people who consumed either 5 prunes or 6 ounces of prune juice every day. But it's not just fiber that explains the magic of prunes. Their naturally occurring sugar alcohol sorbitol may also make a difference.

"Sorbitol is a possibility because the sugar alcohols absolutely have an effect on laxation," explains Slavin. "However, prunes significantly increase flatulence."

That would seem to leave wheat bran in the lead. "All-Bran cereal works," says Slavin. "Psyllium also works." That's the fiber in Metamucil and in cereals like Bran Buds.¹³

"As for food, I'd go with whole grain," she says. But not foods that are "made with whole grain," which are mostly white flour.

That doesn't mean the sky's the limit. "Many people are eating whole-grain cookies, cereals, and breads that are high in calories," notes Slavin. "They aren't going to get healthier—they're going to gain weight."

Her only other caution: "Bran works well for healthy people, but you'd never want to give a bunch of bran to someone who is constipated. There are studies where people take way too much bran, and it gets impacted because nothing moves. You have to deal with the constipation before you get back to fiber. Prevention is better than the cure."

What's worst for regularity? Foods don't have much impact, says Slavin. But "iron supplements—and many medications—are constipating."

The Bottom Line

Here's a summary of which foods do what. What's missing? Exercise and losing excess weight can lower cholesterol, triglycerides, blood pressure, and the risk of colon cancer.

Lowering Blood Pressure

High blood pressure—or hypertension—boosts your odds of having a heart attack or stroke (a “brain attack”). And the odds are that your blood pressure will someday be too high. Among people who still have normal pressure at age 55, nine out of 10 eventually end up with hypertension.

What foods help keep blood pressure in check? “I would emphasize fresh fruits and vegetables that are high in potassium,” says Norman Kaplan, professor of internal medicine at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas.

Topping the list are green leafy vegetables (like spinach, Swiss chard, and beet greens) and deep orange vegetables (like butternut squash and sweet potatoes). Bananas, cantaloupe, and mushrooms are also potassium-packed. So are fish, beans, milk, and yogurt.

The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet—which is rich in fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy foods but low in saturated fat, added sugars, and refined flour—is also rich in calcium and magnesium.¹⁴ (See “What Should I Eat?” October 2009.)

“But when researchers looked at just calcium or magnesium, they didn’t have much effect on blood pressure,” says Kaplan, whose classic textbook, *Kaplan’s Clinical Hypertension*, is in its tenth edition.

In contrast, a meta-analysis of 33 studies showed that potassium supplements (2,300 milligrams a day) lowered blood pressure by an average of 3.3 points.¹⁵ What’s more, people who consume more potassium-rich foods have a lower risk of stroke.¹⁶

How does potassium work? “It’s hard to say for sure, but if you lower potassium levels inside cells experimentally, it makes blood vessels constrict,” explains Kaplan. Stiff, inflexible arteries are a major cause of high blood pressure, especially in older people.

What’s bad for blood pressure is a no-brainer: too much salt. But how?

“Primarily, the mechanism is that sodium expands the volume of blood in the circulation,” says Kaplan. “As volume

GOAL	BEST	SECOND BEST	WORST	DON'T FORGET...
Lowering Cholesterol	Oils, nuts, fatty fish <i>(foods high in unsaturated fats)</i>	Plant sterols Beans, oats, psyllium <i>(foods high in soluble fiber)</i>	Meat, butter, cheese, cream, frosting, pie crust <i>(foods high in saturated or trans fat)</i>	To lower triglycerides, cut back on refined grains and added sugars.
Protecting Eyes	Kale, collards, spinach, Swiss chard <i>(lutein-rich foods)</i>	Salmon, sardines, herring, mackerel <i>(fatty fish)</i>	Soft drinks, sweets, white bread, pasta, rice <i>(refined grains and added sugars)</i>	Studies are testing vitamins C and E, lutein, and fish oils to slow macular degeneration. High doses of B vitamins lowered the risk of macular degeneration in a large study of women at risk for heart disease. ¹
Preventing Colon Cancer	Low-fat milk <i>(calcium-rich foods)</i>	Whole grains, beans, vegetables, fruit <i>(fiber-rich foods)</i>	Bacon, hot dogs, sausage, lunch meats, beef, pork, lamb <i>(red or processed meats)</i>	Regular colonoscopies can prevent colon cancer by removing precancerous polyps. To lower prostate cancer risk, men should limit calcium to 1,200 mg a day (from foods and supplements combined).
Staying Regular	Wheat bran	Beans, prunes, psyllium	Iron supplements	“High-fiber” cereals, bars, and other foods made with inulin, maltodextrin, and other isolated fibers won’t help.
Lowering Blood Pressure	Vegetables, fruit, fish, beans, low-fat milk, yogurt <i>(potassium-rich foods)</i>	Beans <i>(foods high in plant protein)</i> ²	Soups, processed meats, pizza, restaurant dishes <i>(high-salt foods)</i>	Aim for a DASH-like diet (high in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat and added sugars). That also lowers LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.

¹ *Arch. Intern. Med.* 169: 335, 2009.

² *JAMA* 294: 2455, 2005.

increases, pressure goes up. When we go on a lower-sodium intake, the overall volume goes down.”

Diuretics lower blood pressure because they lower blood volume. “You can either take less sodium in or take a drug that increases the excretion of sodium,” says Kaplan.

And swallowing less sodium isn’t a matter of *which* foods, but *how* they’re prepared. “There are no natural foods that are high in sodium,” notes Kaplan.

“If we stay away from processed foods, we could achieve a lower-sodium intake without going to a lot of trouble.” 🍌

¹ www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/index.htm.

² *Circulation* 123: 2292, 2011.

³ *Arch. Ophthalmol.* 126: 354, 2008.

⁴ *Br. J. Nutr.* DOI:10.1017/S0007114511004260.

⁵ *Arch. Ophthalmol.* 126: 1274, 2008.

⁶ wcrf.org/cancer_research/cup/index.php.

⁷ *Ann. Oncol.* DOI:10.1093/annonc/mdr269.

⁸ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 340: 101, 1999.

⁹ *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* 99: 129, 2007.

¹⁰ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 342: 1149, 2000.

¹¹ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 342: 1156, 2000.

¹² *Carcinogenesis* 28: 685, 2007.

¹³ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 88: 1256, 2008.

¹⁴ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 344: 3, 2001.

¹⁵ *JAMA* 277: 1624, 1997.

¹⁶ *Circulation* 98: 1198, 1998.

Online Savvy

BY DAVID SCHARDT

Ever notice those tiny ads for “miracle” supplements or “revolutionary” pills that appear at the margins of almost every Web page you visit? They’re the tip of a multi-million-dollar iceberg. Here’s what’s often below the surface.

You see them everywhere on the Internet these days—small two- and three-line ads offering “revolutionary” or “shocking” discoveries or “easy” or “weird” tips to make your belly fat disappear, your life happier, your joints lubricated, your muscles bigger and stronger (see page 9).

Google and its competitors have made it easy for anyone to advertise on thousands of Web sites, from national publications with millions of readers like *Time* and *The Washington Post* to obscure blogs with a few dozen followers.

While those small ads help support legions of Web sites that would struggle or die without them, and while many of the ads are for legitimate products and services, neither the Web sites nor the networks that distribute the ads do enough to keep an alarming number of shameless exaggerations and deceptive offers out of the mix.

Trust Us

As the scammers try to keep one step ahead of the cyber cops, Internet frauds continue to evolve.

First came fake blogs, with their personal endorsements vouching for the wonders of açai berry weight-loss pills, colon cleansers, and other “miracle” products.

One example: The “Lisa... from California” with “2 kids and a wonderful husband” at lisaweightlossblog.com who lost 16 pounds after taking Acai Berry and Colon Cleanse is black. The “Lisa...from California” with “2 kids and a wonderful husband” at virtually identical lisafitnessguide.com/blog who lost 27 pounds after taking Lean Slim Ultra and Lean Slim Cleanse is white.

Then came “consumer news” sites like news24-online.com, in which a “skeptical” reporter “uncover[s] the truth” and “exposes” the claims behind Internet ads

(“The Acai Berry Diet Exposed: Miracle Diet or Scam?”). But the sites were (and still are) just trying to sell people the same worthless pills, cleansers, and other products.

which touts itself as “Your Source For Unbiased Reviews of Diet Pills For Women.”

Unbiased? Unless you click on the tiny “Disclosure” link at the bottom of the page, you’d never know that dietpillsforwomen.org claims no accuracy for its reviews, that the site is paid commissions on the pills it reviews and sells, and that the site’s reviews “may be perceived as a conflict of interest.”

How to Avoid an Online Fleecing

- **Ignore the pedigree.** Don’t trust an ad just because it appears on the Web site of a major newspaper or other reputable outlet. Most sites sell their space to ad networks and don’t know what ads they’re running.
- **Don’t fall for before-and-after photos.** The shapes and looks of the people in the photos can easily be manipulated with computer software. And the earnest-looking physicians and scientists in the ads are probably models.
- **Beware of “free” trials.** They’re often the company’s way of signing you up for a “negative option.” That means your credit card is automatically charged for monthly deliveries of the product unless you contact the company to cancel (which some operators make next to impossible to do).
- **Don’t blindly trust “review” Web sites.** They’re often run by “affiliate marketers” who steer you to their own products or to products on which they receive commissions.



- **Look for the disclosure.** Sites that receive commissions on products they recommend are supposed to let visitors know.
- **Don’t buy without a street address.** A Web site that has only a toll-free number or e-mail address could be offshore and out of reach if there’s a problem.
- **Check for complaints** that other online consumers may have lodged against the product on legitimate Web sites like complaintsboard.com, complaints.com, and riporffreport.com.

Last April, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) shut down 10 of the worst offenders. “Nearly everything about these sites is fake,” it charged.

The latest scam: “review” sites that purport to evaluate which supplements work best. Take dietpillsforwomen.org,

Willms Web

If you got suckered into buying açai berry weight-loss pills, colon cleansers, “free” credit reports, teeth whiteners, or other dubious Internet offers, you may have fallen into the web of Jesse Willms, 24, of Edmonton, Canada.

Last May, the FTC accused Willms of bilking consumers in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia out of more than \$450 million.

Willms, the FTC charged, deceived millions of online shoppers with “free” or “risk-free” offers, then charged their credit cards recurring monthly fees—typically \$79.95—that were difficult to cancel.

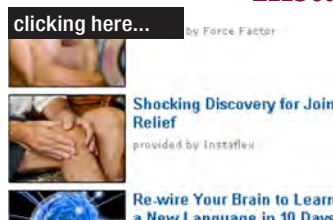

Willms denies the allegations and insists that his business practices were “compliant with the law.”

Before the FTC came after him, Willms was sued by Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Oz for using their names and pictures, without permission, to sell dietary supplements. Before that, he was successfully sued by Microsoft and several other companies for selling counterfeit software.

Click & Quack

Of course, not all supplements sold on the Internet are out-and-out scams. Take the four products on page 9. Each has at least a hint of evidence that it works. Or that one of its ingredients works. Or that one of its ingredients sort of works. Or that...

Instaprofit

clicking here...  ...takes you here 

by Force Factor

Shocking Discovery for Joint Relief
provided by Instaflex

Re-wire Your Brain to Learn a New Language in 10 Days

Joint Relief
Proven, Safe, Fast and Comfortable

Shocking Discovery for Joint Relief, see what Cambridge researchers have uncovered.

One of Americans suffer with everyday joint issues. However your body makes pain proteins in your...
Over time this wear and tear can lead to discomfort, swelling, and sometimes more serious issues. Your joints are the engine of your body, they require the right support.

CLAIM: Instaflex (\$70 a month) is “a revolutionary joint health formula that can help you...live a comfortable, healthy lifestyle.”

WHAT'S IN IT: Eight ingredients commonly found in arthritis supplements, including glucosamine sulfate, MSM, white willow bark extract, ginger, cayenne pepper, and hyaluronic acid.

THE FACTS: Instaflex has never been tested on people with arthritis. Its main ingredient has, though...and it flunked. In a meta-analysis that pooled the results of four studies, the 428 people who took at least 1,500 mg a day of glucosamine sulfate (Instaflex has 1,250 mg) experienced no more relief from their arthritis pain than the 432 people who took a (look-alike but inactive) placebo.¹

And Instaflex's other ingredients don't make the supplement worth taking. In a small industry-funded study, people who took 12 times more MSM than Instaflex contains reported slightly less pain in their arthritic knees than placebo takers.² The largest, longest study of willow bark found that it was no better than a placebo.³ And ginger didn't help with arthritis pain in two of three studies (it barely worked in the third).⁴

BOTTOM LINE: *There is little or no evidence that the ingredients in Instaflex help relieve arthritis pain.*

¹ BMJ 341: c4675, 2010.

³ J. Rheumatol. 31: 2121, 2004.

² Osteo. Cart. 14: 286, 2006.

⁴ Osteo. Cart. 11: 783, 2003.

Somnapure BS

clicking here...  ...takes you here 

Site.
www.PerriconeMD.com

How To Stay Asleep
Obey this one weird trick to stay asleep
www.PeakLife.com/trySomnapure

Alzheimer's or Dementia?
Learn the important differences between

MVP Derrick Rose – Peak Life Athlete
Peak Life's Most Powerful Formula, Restores Energy, Improves Sleep

Somnapure
Peak Life's Most Powerful Formula, Restores Energy, Improves Sleep

Peak Life
PAIN RELIEF
NATURAL
EFFECTIVE
NON-HABIT FORMING

CLAIM: Somnapure (\$70 a month) is a “revolutionary” sleep aid that will “change your life!”

WHAT'S IN IT: Seven ingredients commonly found in sleep and anti-anxiety supplements: melatonin, valerian, theanine, hops extract, lemon balm, chamomile, and passion flower.

THE FACTS: Somnapure has never been tested, though its two main ingredients do seem to have a small impact on sleep in people with insomnia.

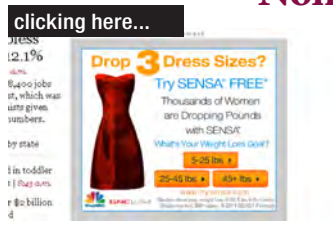

In a meta-analysis of 15 studies, melatonin takers fell asleep an average of four minutes sooner and slept an average of 14 minutes longer than placebo takers.¹ And in a meta-analysis of 18 studies, valerian takers were more likely than placebo takers to say that their sleep had improved. But they didn't rate their sleep any better on a detailed questionnaire and didn't fall asleep any faster.² (The analysis didn't look at whether they slept any longer.) Melatonin and valerian have never been tested together.

BOTTOM LINE: *There is no evidence that Somnapure delivers more than the small impact on sleep that people with insomnia might get from taking melatonin or valerian (\$3 a month each).*

¹ Sleep Med. Rev. 9: 41, 2005.

² Sleep Med. 11: 505, 2010.

NonSensa

clicking here...  ...takes you here 

Drop 3 Dress Sizes?
Try SENSEA™ FREE!
Thousands of Women are Dropping Pounds with SENSEA™
What's Your Weight Loss Goal?

Shape Up with SENSEA™
Lose 30+ Lbs without Dieting
Clinically Proven, 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed

SENSEA™
WEIGHT LOSS SYSTEM

CLAIM: Sprinkling Sensa (\$60 a month) on your food enhances its smell and fools your brain into thinking that you feel full.

WHAT'S IN IT: Granules of natural and artificial flavors.

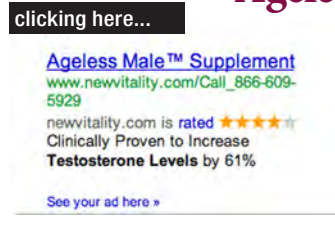

THE FACTS: Sensa's inventor, Chicago neurologist and psychiatrist Alan Hirsch, cites the diet research of Barbara Rolls of Penn State University to help support his claims. But “the notion that just enhancing the sensory properties of food is going to be effective for losing weight has not been proven,” says Rolls.

Hirsch claims that in the larger of his two studies, 2,437 healthy-weight, overweight, or obese people were told to sprinkle Sensa crystals on all of their food for six months. No one got a placebo. Of those who completed the study (slightly more than half), women reportedly lost an average of 30 pounds, men 35 pounds. (The participants weighed themselves and sent their results to the researchers.)

Details of the studies have never been published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal, despite Hirsch's 2008 promise that they would be. “Until they are, it's impossible to judge what's going on,” says Rolls. Did the people really lose weight? If so, could it have been because they changed their diets or exercise habits, not because they took Sensa? We may never know.

BOTTOM LINE: *There is no good published evidence that Sensa produces the extraordinary weight loss that its ads promise.*

Ageless Sale

clicking here...  ...takes you here 

Ageless Male™ Supplement
www.newvitality.com/Call_866-809-5929
newvitality.com is rated ★★★★★
Clinically Proven to Increase Testosterone Levels by 61%

See your ad here ▶

Ageless Male – Testosterone Supplement
All matter of testosterone supplement clinically proven to raise levels by 61%, and still still within a normal healthy range.

Ageless Male Helps Support Normal Testosterone Levels, Which In Turn, Helps Support:

- Healthy Sex Drive*
- Energy Production*
- Positive Mood*

CLAIM: Ageless Male (\$40 a month) “Helps Support Normal Testosterone Levels, Which in Turn, Helps Support a Healthy Sex Drive, Positive Mood, Concentration, and More Zest for Life!”

WHAT'S IN IT: Saw palmetto (a berry promoted to treat enlarged prostates) and astaxanthin (an antioxidant extracted from algae).

THE FACTS: In the supplement's only study, sponsored by Ageless Male's ingredients supplier, 42 men in the African nation of Cameroon took daily doses of saw palmetto and astaxanthin.¹ None got a placebo. After two weeks, the men's average testosterone levels climbed from normal to high-normal or slightly high.

“That's not an impressive increase,” says testosterone expert Alvin Matsumoto of the University of Washington.

The researchers were mum about whether the men's sex drive or “zest for life” improved. You wouldn't expect either, notes Matsumoto. “While increasing blood testosterone to high levels increases muscle mass and strength, there's no evidence that it has any benefits for sex drive, energy, concentration, or mood.”

What's more, levels of estradiol (a form of estrogen) declined. “I would be concerned about that,” says Matsumoto. “In men, estradiol is important for maintenance of bone mineral density, stimulation of HDL cholesterol, and aspects of brain function like verbal memory.”

BOTTOM LINE: *There is no evidence that Ageless Male increases sex drive or improves mood or concentration.*

¹ J. Int. Soc. Sports Nutr. 5: 12, 2008.



Vitamin Score

Vitamins and supplements linked to higher risk of death," reported *TIME* magazine in October. "Study flags risk of daily vitamin use among older women," announced *USA Today*. Yet the results were less than earth-shaking.

Researchers tracked roughly 38,000 women from Iowa aged 55 to 69 for 19 years. Those who regularly took multivitamins had a 6 percent higher risk of dying during that period.

What to do: This study doesn't provide a compelling enough reason to toss your multivitamins.

First, the increased risk of dying was small—one additional death for every 105 women who took a multi for 19 years.

What's more, the study couldn't prove that taking a multivitamin *caused* the higher risk of dying, because the researchers didn't randomly assign women to take either a supplement or a placebo. Something else about the vitamin takers—maybe they were taking a multi because they didn't feel well—might explain their slightly higher risk of dying.

A multivitamin can help if your diet is short on key nutrients like vitamin B-12, vitamin D, or folic acid. Just don't count on it to slash your risk of disease. In most other studies, vitamin takers had no lower—or higher—risk than non-takers (see "Multiplex," September 2011).

Arch. Intern. Med. 171:1625, 2011.

Drop High Doses of Vitamin E

In a 1999-2000 survey of American adults, 23 percent of respondents aged 60 or older said that they took at least 400 IU of vitamin E every day. Hopefully, that's not still the case.

Between 2001 and 2004, the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) randomly assigned roughly 35,000 men aged 55 or older (50 or older for black men) to take vitamin E (400 IU a day), selenium (200 micrograms a day), both, or a placebo. In 2009, researchers stopped the trial when it became clear that the supplements were having no benefit.

In this followup study, which monitored the men until last July, the risk of prostate cancer in those who took vitamin E but not selenium was 17 percent higher than in those who took a placebo. That means one extra prostate cancer for every 100 men taking 400 IU a day of vitamin E alone for 5½ years. Curiously, the men who took vita-

min E and selenium had no higher risk than those who took a placebo.

What to do: There's no reason to take more than the Recommended Dietary Allowance for vitamin E (22.4 IU a day). Taking 100 percent of the Daily Value (30 IU)—the amount in most multivitamins—is also fine. In earlier studies on men and women, the risk of dying began to slowly climb only when intakes exceeded 100 IU a day.

This isn't the first time the popular antioxidant has come up empty. In the Physicians' Health Study, men who took 400 IU of vitamin E every other day for eight years had no higher (or lower) risk of prostate cancer than placebo takers. In other studies, high doses of vitamin E didn't lower the risk of heart disease, precancerous colon polyps, or respiratory infections.

JAMA 306:1549, 2011.

Burn, Baby, Burn

About of vigorous exercise can boost calorie burning for 14 hours, says a new study, one of the few to use a "whole-room calorimeter" to measure calories burned.

Researchers had 10 men aged 22 to 33 ride a stationary bicycle for 45 minutes at a vigorous pace. During the 14 hours after the cycling, the men burned 190 more calories than they did on a day when they were told to move very little. That's in addition to the 520 calories they burned while cycling.

What to do: Any exercise is better than no exercise, and moderate-intensity exercise (like brisk walking) can lower your risk of diabetes, heart disease, breast and colon cancer, and other health problems. But *vigorous* exercise—which means you are too out of breath to talk while you're exercising—burns more calories, both during and after. Vigorous cycling may be safer than running or playing basketball.

Med. Sci. Sports Exerc. 43:1643, 2011.

Saw Palmetto Tanks

As men age, prostate health becomes a big concern," explains Costco's Web site. "Schiff Prostate Health contains several key ingredients, including Saw Palmetto, which has been positively linked in over 20 human clinical studies to promote healthy prostate function."

Not in the most rigorous studies, though.

In the latest, researchers looked at 369 men with lower urinary tract symptoms, which are typically caused by an enlarged prostate (benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH). Each was assigned to take either a placebo or saw palmetto (320 milligrams) for roughly 1½ years. The men took it once a day for the first 24 weeks, twice a day for the second 24 weeks, and three times a day for the third 24 weeks.

The results: Symptoms subsided slightly in both groups. If anything, placebo takers felt *better*.

What to do: Don't bother taking saw palmetto. In a large 2006 trial, the usual dose (320 mg a day) failed to help men with urinary tract symptoms. Researchers carried out the latest trial to see if higher doses were more effective. They weren't. 🍷

JAMA 306:1344, 2011.



VEGGIE MAINS

BY KATE SHERWOOD

Vegetarians among your dinner guests? Here are three veggie main dishes that have their protein built in. Just don't tell the carnivores...unless you're looking for some leftover chicken for your lunch tomorrow.

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

Roasted Butternut Squash & Lentils

Total Time: 30 minutes



- 1 cup French lentils
- 1 lb. butternut squash, cut into ½" cubes
- 4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 Tbs. country Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbs. minced red onion
- 1 tsp. honey
- ½ tsp. salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts

Great warm or cold. To keep the flavor intense, don't add the dressing until you're ready to serve the dish.

Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a large pot, bring the lentils and enough water to cover by 2" to a boil. Simmer until just tender, 18-20 minutes. Drain and return to the pot. Cover and keep warm. Meanwhile, toss the butternut squash in 1 Tbs. of the oil. Roast on a rimmed baking sheet until tender, about 15 minutes. Whisk together the mustard, vinegar, onion, honey, and remaining 3 Tbs. of oil. Gently toss with the lentils and squash. Season with up to ½ tsp. of salt and plenty of pepper. Sprinkle with the walnuts. Serves 4.

Per Serving (1½ cups): Calories 410; Total Fat 19 g; Sat Fat 2.5 g; Protein 15 g; Carbs 47 g; Fiber 17 g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 430 mg

Spinach Pearl Barley Risotto

Total Time: 40 minutes



- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup pearl barley
- 3 cups fat-free milk
- 5 oz. baby spinach
- ¼ cup diced sun-dried tomatoes
- ½ cup dry vermouth or dry white wine
- 3 scallions, sliced
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Want more spinach? Stir it in. Don't like garlic? Use onion instead. Tired of Parmesan? Try Gorgonzola or pecorino.

In a large, deep skillet, sauté the garlic in the oil until lightly golden, 1 minute. Stir in the barley. Add the milk and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring often, until the milk is absorbed and the barley is just starting to stick to the skillet, about 20 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of water and continue cooking until the barley is tender, 5-10 minutes. Add more water, ½ cup at a time as needed, to keep the risotto moist. Stir in the spinach, sun-dried tomatoes, vermouth, scallions, and ¼ cup of the Parmesan. Serve the remaining ¼ cup of Parmesan on the side to sprinkle on at the table. Serves 4.

Per Serving (1½ cups): Calories 440; Total Fat 12 g; Sat Fat 3 g; Protein 17 g; Carbs 59 g; Fiber 11 g; Cholesterol 15 mg; Sodium 400 mg

Sicilian Chickpeas

Total Time: 20 minutes



- 2 Italian eggplants (about ¾ lb.)
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbs. tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes, more to taste
- ½ cup water
- 2 15 oz. cans no-salt-added chickpeas
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbs. chopped fresh mint

Italian (baby) eggplants have a thin skin and their flesh is never bitter. You can also use Japanese eggplants...or replace the 2 eggplants with one large onion. Just stay away from ordinary eggplants.

Dice the eggplant into ½" pieces. Sauté in a large non-stick skillet in the oil until golden brown, 5-7 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste, garlic, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring often, for 2 more minutes. Stir in the water and chickpeas and heat through. Season with up to ½ tsp. of salt. Remove from the heat and stir in the mint. Serves 4.

Per Serving (1½ cups): Calories 340; Total Fat 12 g; Sat Fat 1.5 g; Protein 13 g; Carbs 46 g; Fiber 12 g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 300 mg

No Bun Intended

The top veggie burgers & nuggets

BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

Maybe you'd like to eat less meat to lower your risk of heart disease or colon cancer. Maybe you want to curb greenhouse gas emissions from cattle or minimize your risk of food poisoning from *E. coli* O157:H7. Maybe you've heard that some meatless burgers are dead ringers for hamburgers...except that they take just 1 or 2 minutes in the microwave. Or maybe you just don't like the idea of eating animals.

Regardless of what brought you to the veggie "meat" section of the supermarket, here's what to look for once you're there.

The information for this article was compiled by Emily Caras.

1. SEARCH FOR LESS SODIUM. Salt is the Achilles' heel of veggie meats. Whether it's a meaty beef or chicken wannabe or a who-cares-about-meat grains-and-veggie patty, sodium levels typically reach 300 milligrams or more. Even without a bun—which is likely to add another 200 to 300 mg—that's high for a food that has just 100 to 200 calories.

To their credit, some brands have cut the salt. Amy's Light in Sodium California Veggie Burger, for example, has "50% less sodium than our regular burger," and her Texas Veggie Burger has "only 350 mg of sodium," according to the boxes. Dr. Praeger's "reduced sodium" burgers clock in at around 250 mg.

But others—like Gardein The Ultimate Beefless Burger, Morningstar Farms Mushroom Lover's Burger and Grillers Original, and Veggie Patch Chick'n Nuggets—are in the same range. They just don't boast about it. Take-home message: check the Nutrition Facts panel, not just the front of the package.

Our Best Bites have no more than 250 mg of sodium. Honorable Mentions have no more than 350 mg. Check the bottom of the page for our taste picks.

2. CONSIDER PROTEIN. Don't assume that your veggie burger has as much protein as the hamburger it replaces. A typical meat burger has about 20 grams of protein. Veggie burgers range from 3 to 26 grams.

How much protein do you need? The Recommended Dietary Allowance is equal to 0.36 grams per pound of body weight. (Divide your weight by 3 to get a rough estimate; 40 grams a day for someone who weighs 120 pounds, for example.) However, many experts recommend more to help you hang on to muscle as you age. To reach that higher level, divide your weight by 2 (60 grams a day for a 120-pounder). And some researchers argue that older people need 20 to 30 grams of protein in each meal to keep building muscle.

It's hard to get there if your veggie burger has only 5 or 7 grams of protein (unless you're also having a protein-rich food like beans or Greek yogurt). Unfortunately, some of our favorites—like Morningstar Farms Mushroom Lover's Burger and Dr. Praeger's California Veggie Burgers—are in that range. If you don't eat much meat, chicken, or seafood, it's worth shooting for veggie burgers that have at least 10 grams of protein. That's what we required in our Best Bites.

3. KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING. Protein varies so much in veggie burgers because their ingredients range from mostly soy protein concentrate (like Boca Burgers and Patties, Gardein The Ultimate Beefless Burger, and most Morningstar Farms Grillers) to mostly vegetables and grains (like Gardenburgers, Organic Sunshine Burgers, and many Dr. Praeger's).

Before you buy, check the box's Nutrition Facts panel. Our Best Bites have at least 10 grams of protein. Most get that high from added soy protein. Don't go by the product's name. Morningstar Farms Garden Veggie Patties, for example, sound and look like they're mostly vegetables, but each burger has 10 grams of protein (thanks to soy).

Wheat gluten is another source of protein in many burgers. If you're gluten intolerant, try Dr. Praeger's Gluten Free California Veggie Burgers, Helen's Kitchen The Original GardenSteak, or Amy's Bistro Burger.



Morningstar Farms Tomato & Basil Pizza Burger. Not quite a pizza or a beef burger, but delish.



Gardein The Ultimate Beefless Burger. Surprisingly "meaty" and juicy...like a real beef burger.



Morningstar Farms Garden Veggie Patties. More protein than many other veggie- or grain-filled patties.



Veggie Patch Chick'n Nuggets. Half the sodium of some other leading nuggets...but no less flavor.

VEGGIE GOOD

BRAND-NAME RATING

Best Bites (✓✓) have at least 10 grams of protein, no more than 250 milligrams of sodium, and no more than 1.5 grams of saturated fat. **Honorable Mentions** (✓) have no minimum protein requirement and can have up to 350 mg of sodium. Within each section, products are ranked from least to most sodium, then most to least protein.

	Calories	Protein (g)	Sodium (mg)
MEATLESS BURGERS (1 patty—about 2.5 oz., unless noted)			
✓ Dr. Praeger's Gluten Free California Veggie ^G	120	5	180
Asherah's Gourmet Vegan (4 oz.)* ^{G1}	180	6	190
✓ Morningstar Farms Mushroom Lover's	110	7	220
✓✓ Franklin Farms Original Recipe Fresh Veggi ^G	100	12	250
✓ Organic Sunshine Burgers—Barbecue or South West ^{G1}	250	8	250
✓ Amy's Light in Sodium California Veggie	110	5	250
✓ Dr. Praeger's—Bombay Curry Veggie, California Veggie, Italian Veggie, or Tex Mex Veggie ¹	110	5	250
✓ Morningstar Farms Grillers Original	130	15	260
✓ Dr. Praeger's Meatless Southwest	120	12	260
✓ Gardenburger Sun-Dried Tomato Basil	100	4	270
✓ Gardein The Ultimate Beefless (3 oz.)	130	17	280
✓ Helen's Kitchen The Original GardenSteak (3 oz.) ^G	160	16	280
✓ Morningstar Farms Grillers Vegan	100	12	280
✓ Morningstar Farms Tomato & Basil Pizza	120	10	280
✓ Franklin Farms Portabella Fresh Veggi ^G	100	14	290
✓ Boca—Cheeseburger, Grilled Vegetable, Original Vegan, or Savory Mushroom Mozzarella ¹	90	13	310
✓ Worthington FriPats	130	15	320
✓ Organic Sunshine Burgers—Garden Herb or Original ^{G1}	190	8	320
✓ Amy's Bistro ^G	110	5	330
✓ Dr. Praeger's Meatless All American	130	15	350
✓ Amy's Texas Veggie	140	12	350
✓ Morningstar Farms Spicy Black Bean	120	11	350
✓ Morningstar Farms Garden Veggie Patties	110	10	350
✓ Veggie Patch Mediterranean Spinach & Chickpea Patties	120	5	350
Morningstar Farms Grillers Prime	170	17	360
Boca All American Flame Grilled	120	14	380
Amy's All American Veggie	140	13	390
Veggie Patch The Ultimate Meatless	110	12	390
Veggie Patch Veggie Lover's	110	3	390

4. KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING. Meat isn't just a good source of protein. It's also rich in nutrients like zinc, iron, and the B vitamins. You'll find the latter two added to a handful of veggie burgers like Morningstar Farms Grillers Original, Grillers ¼ Pound Burger, Chik Patties Original, and Italian Herb Chik Patties.

The added iron and vitamin B-12 are a plus if you frequently eat veggie burgers (and you don't take a multivitamin). You're not likely to run short of the other B vitamins.

And the added B-12 is important if you're over 50, because some older people can't absorb the naturally occurring B-12 that's bound to the protein in food. That's why it's good to get some B-12 from a multivitamin or from a fortified food like a breakfast cereal...or a veggie burger.

Also missing from veggie burgers—don't shed a tear—is meat's saturated fat. A broiled 3 oz. burger made of "lean" ground beef delivers 6 grams of sat fat (about a third of a day's worth). Few veggie burgers have more than 1 gram.

	Calories	Protein (g)	Sodium (mg)
Gardenburger, except Sun-Dried Tomato Basil ¹	100	4	420
Yves Meatless Beef	110	14	440
Boca Bruschetta Tomato Basil Parmesan	90	13	440
Trader Joe's Veggie (3.5 oz.)*	230	5	470
Morningstar Farms Grillers ¼ Pound (4 oz.)*	250	26	490
Morningstar Farms Asian Veggie Patties	100	7	490
Boca All American Classic	140	15	500
Amy's Veggie—Sonoma ^G , California, or Cheddar ¹	150	7	500
Amy's Quarter Pound Veggie (4 oz.)	210	20	600
Morningstar Farms Chipotle Black Bean (4.2 oz.)	210	17	700
For comparison: Ground beef, 20% fat (3 oz.) ^{†G}	230	22	60

"CHICKEN" PATTIES (1 patty—about 2.5 oz., unless noted)

✓✓ Helen's Kitchen Chik'n GardenSteak (3 oz.) ^G	160	16	210
✓✓ Dr. Praeger's Chickenless	160	13	250
✓ SoyBoy Vegan Okara Courage Burger	130	13	280
✓ Morningstar Farms Grillers Chik'n	80	9	350
Morningstar Farms Grillers California Turk'y	90	9	390
Health is Wealth Chicken-Free	110	12	400
Yves Meatless Chicken Burgers	100	15	420
Dr. Praeger's Chickenless Buffalo	160	15	430
Boca Original Chik'n ¹	160	11	430
Morningstar Farms Italian Herb Chik	170	10	480
Boca Spicy Chik'n ¹	160	11	560
Morningstar Farms Chik Original	140	8	590

"CHICKEN" NUGGETS, TENDERS, & WINGS (Number closest to 3 oz.)

✓ Dr. Praeger's Chickenless Nuggets (5)	210	14	290
✓ Veggie Patch Chick'n Nuggets (4)	170	11	330
Gardein Seven Grain Crispy Tenders (3)	150	12	380
Health is Wealth Chicken Free Nuggets (3)	120	14	450
Boca Original Meatless Chik'n Nuggets (4)	180	14	500
Dr. Praeger's Chickenless Buffalo Nuggets (5)	200	14	580
Morningstar Farms Original Chik'n Tenders (2)	190	12	580
Morningstar Farms Chik'n Nuggets (4)	190	12	600
Morningstar Farms Buffalo Wings (5)	200	12	640

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ¹Average.

* Contains 2 to 2.5 grams of saturated fat.

† Contains 6 grams of saturated fat. ^G Gluten free.

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

Saturated Fat: 20 grams.

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

5. AVOID QUORN. We ignored the entire Quorn line of burgers and "chicken" because its main ingredient—a "mycoprotein" that's made from a fungus (a mold, actually)—causes severe vomiting, diarrhea, and stomachache in some people. It also can cause potentially fatal anaphylactic shock. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher, has urged Whole Foods to stop selling Quorn and has called on the FDA to ban the mycoprotein. (To report an adverse reaction, go to quorncomplaints.org.)

6. TEMPT YOUR TASTE BUDS. Veggie burgers range from terrific to one-bite-is-enough. We had trouble getting used to several burgers made by Asherah's Gourmet and Organic Sunshine Burgers, for example. They (and most other burgers) might taste better sautéed in a skillet. We cooked ours in the microwave because it's quickest. And breaded chicken patties are best when baked in a toaster (or ordinary) oven. 🍷

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The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), founded in 1971, is an independent nonprofit consumer health group. CSPI advocates honest food labeling and advertising and safer and more nutritious foods. CSPI's work is supported by *Nutrition Action Healthletter* subscribers and foundation grants. CSPI accepts no government or industry funding. *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, first published in 1974, accepts no advertising.

RIGHT STUFF

FOOD PORN

MUESLI MARVEL

"Originally developed in the late 1800's by a Swiss nutritionist, Muesli is a delightful cereal made from a blend of whole grains, dried fruits, nuts and seeds," explains the label of **Bob's Red Mill Old Country Style Muesli**.

Delightful is right, whether you microwave or boil it for 3 to 5 minutes with milk or water to make a hearty hot cereal, or you just stir it into your milk or yogurt cold.

Either way, you've got a bowl of "whole grain rolled oats, wheat, rye, triticale and barley, along with sweet and chewy dates and raisins, sunflower seeds, almonds and

walnuts for a high energy Muesli," according to the label.

Okay. Forget that last part. When a label talks about "energy," it means "calories," not an energy boost. And speaking of calories, odds are you'll get more than the 110 that are listed on the Nutrition Facts panel. That's for a quarter-cup serving that won't even cover the bottom of some bowls.

So let's say you use half a cup and get 220 calories' worth of cereal. Don't worry. They come with 8 grams of fiber, 8 grams of protein, and no sodium. And the Muesli's whole grains are *intact*, which means they'll help keep you regular (and help keep a lid on your blood sugar levels) better than whole grains that have been ground into flour. Bonus: there's no sugar beyond what comes naturally from the raisins and dates.

When Bob says "Old Country Style," he means it.

Bob's Red Mill: (800) 349-2173



DON'T KNOW JACK

T.G.I. Friday's is big on poultry. You can choose from a **BBQ Chicken Wrap**, a **California Club**, a **Caribbean Chicken Sandwich**, and a **Jack**

Daniel's Chicken Sandwich. Is this a health-conscious chain or not?

Not. Take the Jack Daniel's. "A grilled chicken breast basted in Jack Daniel's glaze and topped with bacon, mixed cheese and Cajun onion straws, not to mention lettuce, tomatoes, pickles and Jack Daniel's mayo," croons the menu.

We didn't notice any crooning over the sandwich's 1,140 calories and day's worth of saturated fat (18 grams) seasoned with close to a two-day supply of sodium (2,780 milligrams). It's like eating a full rack of Friday's Baby Back Ribs. The chain's other chicken sandwiches are in the same ballpark (complete with oversized white-flour bun).

Oops. That's without any sides. You've got your choice of seasoned fries (290 calories), side salad (40 calories without dressing), or, for another 99 cents, sweet potato fries (390 calories).

To its credit, the chain has a "Right Portion, Right Price" menu. Each item (though still too salty) has less than 750 calories. Some, like the delicious Shrimp Key West and Dragonfire Salmon, even come with steamed broccoli.

Hey Friday's! Why not keep your *entire* menu under 750 calories? Or does your name really stand for Thank Goodness It's Fattening?

T.G.I. Friday's: (800) 374-3297



dish OF THE MONTH

Black Bean Salsa

Combine 1 can of no-salt-added black beans (drained and rinsed) with 1 chopped avocado, ¼ diced red onion, and a handful of cilantro leaves. Season with the juice of half a lime and ¼ tsp. of kosher salt. Use as a garnish for grilled chicken, fish, or shrimp or as a filling for tacos.