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CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

SCALING BACK

Scientists search for keys to weight loss

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

It's January, the time of year when health club memberships spike and people search for the fastest way to lose the extra pounds that snuck up on them in December...or over the last 10 years.

Of course, diet books promise to make those extra pounds vanish in weeks (if not days). And you'll never, ever feel hungry again!

What's the latest from scientists trying to crack the code on weight loss? You won't find it on the bestseller list.

Continued on page 3.



MEMO FROM MFJ

Slow Shopping...and an Invitation



I must be the slowest shopper ever. Standing in front of the breakfast cereals or yogurts or sugar drinks, I'm always examining the front and back labels, comparing one brand to another, and taking notes.

You see, the supermarket is my laboratory, and the laboratory for my colleagues at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (*Nutrition Action's* publisher).

When I'm shopping, I'm also checking out how sodium varies from brand to brand. Or I'm uncovering labels that are so deceptive that they are begging for government crackdowns...or litigation.

Why lawsuits? Basically, because they work.

For years, we would meet with company officials to discuss misleading marketing practices. Everyone listened politely, but more often than not, the companies wouldn't make any of the changes we recommended. That changed in 2004, when CSPI started a litigation department. For the first time I felt that companies took us seriously.

Of course, litigation has its limits. It only affects one product or company at a time, whereas laws or regulations (like banning an additive or requiring nutrition labeling) can affect an entire industry. But getting a law passed means overcoming industry lobbying and campaign contributions, and getting a new regulation adopted is subject to political pressures and can take forever. In contrast, settling a lawsuit can be relatively quick, and the courts generally provide a level playing field that puts the two sides on equal footing.

CSPI's litigation department, now headed by attorney Maia Kats, generally focuses on the biggest companies, because by changing the

practices of industry leaders, we can sometimes change the marketplace.

For instance, by threatening a lawsuit we got Kellogg to stop advertising its least-healthy breakfast cereals, cookies, and snack foods to young children. That was the first legal agreement of its kind. After that, other major companies, like Mars and General Mills, voluntarily reduced junk-food advertising to kids.

Similarly, to end our litigation against Coca-Cola, we reached an agreement that bars health claims on its Vitaminwater labels and requires

prominent notice of the drinks' added sugar. (A 20 oz. bottle of regular Vitaminwater contains almost eight teaspoons of added sugar.)

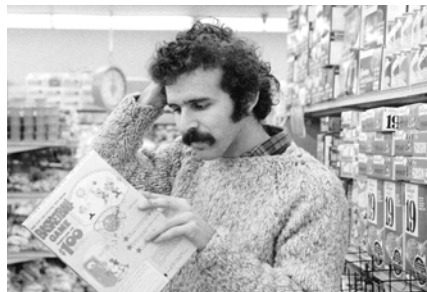
We also reached an agreement with Plum Organics, a division of Campbell, to name its baby foods based largely

on their most predominant ingredients.

Most recently, we sued General Mills over Cheerios Protein, which purports to be a protein-enhanced version of the old standard, when in fact a serving has 16 times the sugar and negligibly more protein.

Previous legal actions targeted Kraft Capri Sun, 7UP, General Mills Nature Valley granola bars, Sara Lee Whole Wheat White Bread, and a slew of others. Most led to more-honest and more-informative labels.

Please share the field research and help get me out of the supermarket faster! When you shop, if you see deceptive labels—either because of what they say or what they omit—send me a note and a photo. Thanks.



In my "laboratory" in 1972.

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., President
Center for Science in the Public Interest

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SCALING BACK

Scientists search for keys to weight loss

Two out of three American adults are overweight or obese. And people who lose weight are unlikely to keep it off. Here's how scientists are trying to tackle the problem...and how a few successful dieters have managed to beat the odds.

Is Insulin a Villain?

"We do not get fat because we overeat," writes Gary Taubes in *Why We Get Fat: And What to Do About It*. "We get fat because the carbohydrates in our diet make us fat."

Carbs make us fat by boosting insulin, argues Taubes. And "you don't lose fat because you cut calories; you lose fat because you cut out the foods that make you fat—the carbohydrates."

In other words, the obesity epidemic would vanish if we all switched to a low-carb diet.

"Taubes is talking about magical effects of low-carb diets," says Susan Roberts, director of the Energy Metabolism Laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

"He says that you burn off calories because having less insulin floating around means that your metabolism is in the right place to easily mobilize the fat stored in fat cells."

That may sound plausible. But is it true? A handful of researchers are trying to find out.

Metabolic Advantage?

"People had been arguing for decades about low-carb versus low-fat diets for weight loss," says Kevin Hall, a senior investigator in the Laboratory of Biological Modeling at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

"And it occurred to me that no one had ever tested what would happen if you cut

carbs from a diet while keeping fat and protein constant versus if you cut fat while keeping carbs and protein constant."

So Hall recruited 19 obese adults and cut their calories (they had been averaging about 2,700 a day) by 30 percent. For one week the people cut about 800 calories' worth of carbs, and for another week they cut about 800 calories' worth of fat.¹

"It was a short but very well-controlled clinical trial," explains Hall. "We controlled everything they ate, and they spent their days in a metabolic chamber that they weren't allowed to leave so we could measure exactly how many calories and how much fat versus carbs they burned."

The results, Hall says, "were quite surprising."

As expected, insulin secretion fell on the lower-carb diet, but not on the lower-fat diet. The surprise: "People lost slightly more body fat when we cut fat than when we cut carbs."

Over the long term, notes Hall, those differences would be too small to matter. And people were only on each diet for a week, so the study wasn't designed to see which one led to more weight loss. But that's not the point.

"Taubes has claimed that the only way to lose body fat is to decrease the amount of insulin secreted," says Hall. "But our lower-fat diet led to fat loss without cutting carbs or insulin. So that claim about low-carb diets is incorrect. We found no metabolic advantage to a lower-carb diet."

On the contrary, metabolic rates dropped on the lower-carb diet.

"Folks have argued that because insulin sequesters fat in fat cells, it makes people more hungry and decreases the number of calories they burn," says Hall. "But in our study people burned fewer calories when we cut carbs, not when we cut fat."

How Low?

Critics argue that Hall's study didn't cut carbs enough to have mattered.

"Is a diet with about 30 percent carbohydrates sufficiently restricted to be considered a low-carb diet?" asked Taubes in an August *New York Times* op-ed.

Hall says that he couldn't have gone lower in his study. Cutting 800 calories' worth of fat trimmed nearly all the fat out of people's diets, he explains. "If we had cut more than 800 calories' worth of carbs, we couldn't have cut the fat calories equally."

A very-low-carb diet might have yielded



A very-low-carb diet limits how much fresh fruit you can eat.

different results, he notes. "Our computer simulations suggest that if we went to very low carb levels, calorie burning might not have dropped."

But cutting way back on carbs isn't easy. "Very-low-carb diets are not practical at all," says Tufts' Susan Roberts, who is the founder of the online iDiet program. "They're effective in the short term because



FROM WINDED TO IRONMAN

"A little over 10 years ago I decided to live my life differently," says Kristen Faughnan. The 35-year-old process engineer from Philadelphia was 24, and she weighed 275 pounds. "I'd get winded climbing up a flight of stairs," she remembers.



Kristen at her 2002 college graduation.

It's not as though Kristen hadn't tried to lose weight before. "I tried all kinds of diets. I was good for a long time—as many people are—but then I'd burn out. And I'd gain back what I had lost or even more.

"So it was up-down, up-down, sometimes up-up-up. At one point I got tired of yo-yoing, and I thought, 'I'm just going to eat whatever I want and be happy with myself,' though I never was."

A visit to the doctor got her thinking. "He said, 'I'm looking at your family history, and I see diabetes and heart conditions, and I'm worried because you're so young. You could have diabetes in 10 years.'"

Kristen began slowly. "I started by weeding out things like junk foods and soda. I learned about calories in and calories out. I realized that no matter what diet you go on—low-fat, low-carb, whatever—all it's doing is lowering your calories."

It took three years, but Kristen lost 130 pounds. "It was 75 the first year and the last 10 to 15 the last year. Those are always the hardest. Now I'm down to 145."

She didn't do it with diet alone. "I started doing a lot of walking, going out on lunch breaks."

Joining a gym wasn't easy. "It took me two to three months to work up the courage, because I was afraid people would make fun of me. Eventually I got bolder. I started long-distance running, then half marathons, and slowly transitioned to triathlons. I learned to swim at age 30, and in 2014 I did my first Ironman."

Running is no license to eat like she used to, though. "If I run three miles, that's like 300 calories—a banana and a bowl of oatmeal. So if I eat a lot of pizza, exercise isn't going to reverse that."

Kristen is wary when eating out. "At Starbucks, some drinks are no different than ice cream. At some places, salads have more calories than a cheeseburger. And at the food store, I shop the perimeter. Most of the middle is mostly starchy white carbohydrate."

Kristen says that she didn't set out to lose 130 pounds. "I thought if I could just get closer to 200, if I



Kristen finishing an Ironman in 2014.

could just fit into a pair of pants in my closet. I never ever thought I'd get to where I am now. Ever."

More than Kristen's weight has changed. "People treat you differently when you're overweight. They look at you a certain way. I always felt like a failure. Now everything has changed. I lost weight and gained confidence."

they're good for hunger suppression. But they're not sustainable."

In a meta-analysis of 13 studies that assigned participants to eat very-low-carb diets for at least one year, only one study reported that people reached the target for carbs set by the meta-analysis.²

(The target: no more than 10 percent of calories or no more than 50 grams of carbohydrate a day. You'd get more than 50 grams of carbs from one apple and one banana.)

What's more, adds Roberts, "very-low-carb diets have a number of unpleasant side effects. People get constipated. They have bad breath.

"And many people build up an urge to have a doughnut or some other carbs and fall off the wagon. Then they gain the weight back really rapidly because the water comes back on."

Roberts is talking about the "water weight" that people lose when they first go on a very-low-carb diet.

"The stored carbohydrate in your body is glycogen, and for every gram of glycogen, you bind up about three grams of water," explains Hall. "So as you use up that stored carb and cut carbs in your diet, you lose a lot of water."

You also lose water because the drop in insulin caused by a very-low-carb diet leads the kidneys to excrete more water, he adds. So when people give in and start eating more pasta and pizza, the water weight quickly returns.

"People get very disillusioned because it feels like they're trying their hardest, and five pounds comes back like nothing," says Roberts. "They don't realize that they lost five pounds of water in the first place."

The Hunger Games

Hunger is the new buzzword.

It explains why most diets fail, and why low-carb diets work, argued Taubes' op-ed. (Its title: "Diet Advice that Ignores Hunger.")

And it's the culprit in *Always Hungry?*, by David Ludwig, professor of pediatrics at Harvard Medical School, which blames obesity largely on highly processed carbs.

But in the best studies—trials that assign people to different diets for at least one

FROM YO-YO TO EVEREST

year—people lose no more weight on lower-carb diets than on other diets.^{3,4}

“The Pounds Lost study was the longest and largest trial, and we found no difference,” says Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (Of course, in Pounds Lost, as in most studies, people didn’t stick to the diets over the long haul.)

So what about those blaring headlines that people lose more weight on low-carb diets? Most are based on meta-analyses that examine a dozen-or-so studies. But if you read the fine print, the difference in weight lost between diets is only about two pounds after a year...and that’s in people who are obese or severely obese.^{2,5}

“The differences appear to be of little clinical significance,” concluded one paper.

In fact, nearly all experts agree on one thing: “The most important question is whether someone can stick to a diet,” says Hall. “We want to know why most people seem to lapse within a year, no matter what the diet prescription.”

It’s a common refrain. “On almost any diet, you typically see the same weight loss for the first six to eight months, then a plateau, then slow regain over subsequent months,” adds Hall. “So many people are on their way back to where they started.”

It’s not just that metabolic rate slows when you lose weight, notes Hall. “Metabolism does slow, but it can’t really explain the plateau or regain.”

What matters is that people start eating more. “That’s why people have a hard time sticking to any diet over the long term,” says Hall.

And it’s why people like Kristen Faughnan and Mitch Segal have such compelling stories (see boxes). They’re members of the National Weight Control Registry, which tracks more than 10,000 people who have lost at least 30 pounds *and kept it off* for at least a year.⁶

Researchers want to know why some people can keep the weight off while others can’t.

“Maybe some people do better on one kind of diet and others do better on other kinds,” says Hall. “That’s what our future work is designed to assess.”

“My weight yo-yoed up and down all my life until 2004, when I finally committed myself to getting it off,” says Mitch Segal, a 65-year-old accountant from the Washington, D.C., suburbs.

What made him change? “One day I couldn’t fasten my size 42 pants. Also, my son was finishing his ROTC program to go into the Marine Corps, where everyone is very fit. And I didn’t want him pointing to his father and saying ‘He’s the fat guy over there.’” Mitch’s weight at the time: 242 pounds.

“So I joined Weight Watchers and started going to the gym every day. Between May and November I lost 70 pounds. I was changing my diet and getting exercise. But having someone weigh me in at the Weight Watch-



Mitch in 2004.

ers meetings every week was an important driver for keeping me on task.”

The difficult part, says Mitch, was keeping the weight off. “But right about that time smartphones came into use, so I got myself an app called Fat Secret. I use it to record everything I eat.

“I love the fact that I can scan the barcode on a can of food with my iPhone, and it shows up on my calorie counter. If we go out for Indian food, some dishes aren’t in

the app, so I’ll find the closest thing. I don’t dissect every ingredient. That takes all the fun out of eating.”

The key to Weight Watchers is measuring portions. That works for Mitch. “I don’t believe that people stick to programs that say



Mitch hiking in Nepal in 2012.

you can’t have this or that food anymore. There’s a great pizza place where I go hiking, so I bring one back home. I don’t deprive myself. I measure.”

In 2015, Mitch tightened up his eating and lost 10 more pounds. “I now weigh less than I did in high school.” But his strategy is the same. He weighs himself every day and uses a smartphone to track the calories he burns.

“I stop at the gym to do about two hours of exercise a day before work. I listen to podcasts to occupy my mind and learn something while I’m on the treadmill or elliptical or rowing machine. On weekends, I try to hike near the Appalachian Trail. But I’m not an athlete by any stretch of the imagination.”

Two years after Mitch lost weight, at age 56, he gave himself a present.

“I decided to trek to the Mount Everest base camp. I’ve been to Nepal three times now and been as high as 21,000 feet.”



Different Strokes...

"Why losing weight is so hard for some people," ran the headline in *Time* magazine in November.

"If you've ever tried out the latest diet fad only to find yourself gaining weight..." reported the *Washington Post*, "scientists now have an explanation for you."

What spurred the headlines? A new Israeli study that didn't even look at weight loss.⁷ It looked at how much blood sugar levels rise after people eat different foods (see Quick Studies, p. 7).

"We don't have evidence that higher blood sugar means more weight gain," says Sacks. "It's not that simple."

In a well-controlled trial that lasted a year, people who ate foods that typically keep a lid on blood sugar levels lost no more weight than people who ate foods that tend to raise blood sugar.⁸

Meanwhile, scientists are looking for other clues. Christopher Gardner, professor of medicine at Stanford University, has been testing a low-fat versus low-carb diet on roughly 600 people for a year each (see Dec. 2013, cover story).

The study hasn't ended, but based on the views of the health educators who work with the dieters, "it appears that in the end, the difference between the two groups will be negligible," says Gardner.

"However, there is this massive range within each group. Some people lost 60 pounds, some lost 0, and a whole lot lost 20 pounds." His goal: to figure out why.

"We're genotyping them, looking at their insulin resistance, and looking at their microbiomes. Our hypothesis is that some genetic, metabolic, or microbiotic finger-

The Bottom Line

- Cut carbs, fat, portion size, or anything else that cuts calories.
- Start by cutting unhealthy carbs—added sugars and white flour—that we overdo.
- Get most of your carbs from fresh or frozen vegetables or fruit (see March 2015, p. 7).
- Pick a diet you can stick to for the long haul.

SNACK ATTACK

It's not just restaurant meals that can thwart your diet (see p. 8). A quick "snack"—often packed with carbs, fat, or both—can also cause trouble.

Starbucks
Tiramisu Latte
(venti, 20 oz.)



390 calories

Auntie Anne's
Sweet Almond
Soft Pretzel



390 calories

Starbucks
Banana Nut Bread



420 calories

Pinkberry
Chocolate Hazelnut
Frozen Yogurt
(large, 13 oz.)



520 calories

Panera Bread
Pumpkin Muffin



590 calories

Jamba Juice
Amazing Greens
Smoothie
(28 oz.)



610 calories

Cold Stone Creamery
Very Vanilla Shake
(love it, 20 oz.)



1,210 calories

Five Guys
Fries
(large)



1,310 calories

print will help us identify who is predisposed to lose weight on one diet versus the other."

Harvard researchers have also looked at whether people with different genotypes lost more (or less) weight in the Pounds Lost study.⁹⁻¹¹

"We have some evidence that genotypes influence the effect of diets on weight loss," says Sacks. "But so far, the effects are small and the findings are preliminary."

What to do in the meantime?

In 2013, a panel of experts from the Obesity Society, the American Heart Association, and the American College of Cardiology looked at which diets are best for

weight loss. The panel's advice: *any* diet that ends up cutting calories will work.¹²

Most importantly, look for a diet you can stick to. "Don't view a diet as something temporary," says Hall. "View it as something to permanently incorporate into your daily life." 🍌

¹ *Cell Metab.* 22: 427, 2015.

² *Br. J. Nutr.* 110: 1178, 2013.

³ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 360: 859, 2009.

⁴ *JAMA* 312: 923, 2014.

⁵ *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol.* 3: 968, 2015.

⁶ www.nwcr.ws.

⁷ *Cell* 163: 1079, 2015.

⁸ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 85: 1023, 2007.

⁹ *Diabetes* 61: 3005, 2012.

¹⁰ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 95: 506, 2012.

¹¹ *Circulation* 127: 1283, 2013.

¹² *Circulation* 129: S102, 2014.

How Sweet!



Foods may taste sweeter when you cut back on sugar.

Cutting back on sugar may make foods taste sweeter than they do when you eat a more sugary diet.

Scientists randomly assigned 33 men and women to eat either a low-sugar diet or their usual diet for three months. (All the participants reported averaging at least two sugar-sweetened soft drinks a day before entering the study, which was funded in part by Pepsi.)

The low-sugar group was told to replace 40 percent of their sugars with protein, fats, and non-sugar carbs, to dilute beverages with water or seltzer, and to avoid artificial sweeteners.

By the third month, the low-sugar group rated vanilla puddings and raspberry beverages as tasting sweeter than the usual-diet group did. However, eating less sugar didn't lead the low-sugar group to prefer lower-sugar pudding or drinks.

What to do: Try cutting back on sugary foods to see if foods with less sugar start tasting just as sweet.

Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2015. doi:10.3945/ajcn.115.112300.

Blood Sugar...Not So Simple to Predict

How much does a food raise blood sugar levels? The answer varies widely from person to person.

For one week, Israeli scientists continuously monitored blood sugar levels in 800 people aged 18 to 70 who did not have diabetes (though some had prediabetes).

The participants used smartphones to track every food they ate as well as their activities (like eating or sleeping).

The researchers didn't tell the people what to eat, except for breakfast, which was one of four options that each supplied the same amount (50 grams) of carbohydrate: two slices of bread, two slices of bread plus butter, a 200-calorie glucose drink, or a 200-calorie fructose drink.

The same breakfasts caused much higher blood sugar levels in some people than in others. (Exception: blood sugar was more uniform—and predictably low—after the fructose drink.)

What's more, when the researchers looked at meals other than breakfast, blood sugar levels rose far more in some people than in others after they ate high-carb meals.

The researchers found differences in the participants' gut bacteria that may explain why blood sugar levels varied so much from person to person.

What to do: Don't pay much attention to diet books that recommend foods based on their glycemic index—that is, how much they raise average blood sugar levels. Studies that feed people low-glycemic foods haven't found much benefit anyway, except for keeping a lid on blood sugar in people who already have diabetes (see March 2015, cover story).

Cell Metab. 163: 1079, 2015.

Omega-3s & Depression

Number one on the "Top Five Anti Depression Supplements" list at betterhealthstore.com: fish oil. But a new review says that omega-3 fats may not help.

Researchers with the Cochrane Collaboration looked at 26 studies that tested omega-3 fats against a placebo (or, in one case, an antidepressant) in people with major depressive disorder.

The results: evidence that was "low or very low quality" and a benefit so small that it "is unlikely to be meaningful."

What to do: Don't assume that there's good evidence that omega-3 fats lift depression.

Cochrane Database System Rev. 2015. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD004692.pub4.

Berry Good

Looking for a snack to hold you over until your next meal? Fresh fruit may make you less likely than candy to overeat at dinner.

Researchers assigned 12 young women to eat either a 65-calorie (about 1-cup) serving of mixed berries (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries) or a 65-calorie serving of a British candy called Bassetts Jelly Babies Berry Mix ("contains fruit juice," says the label).

An hour later, the women were allowed to eat as much of a pasta meal as they wanted. They consumed 825 calories' worth of pasta after having the candy snack. That was about 20 percent

more than the 690 calories' worth of pasta they consumed an hour after having the berries snack. The

authors noted that the candy took less time (about 1 minute) to eat than the berries (4 minutes).

What to do: If you're hungry before lunch or dinner, try snacking on fresh fruit or vegetables. 🍓

Appetite 95: 132, 2015.



RESTAURANTROULETTE

How many calories do you get when you eat out? Researchers analyzed main dishes at independent and small-chain restaurants in Boston to find out. The average entrée (with sides) had roughly 1,300 calories, says Susan Roberts, director of the Energy Metabolism Laboratory at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University. "And that's with no drink, appetizer, or dessert." 🍷

GREEK

Greek Salad*
960 calories



Gyro
990 calories

Lamb Kabob**
1,260 calories

Pastitsio**
1,470 calories



Moussaka**
1,440 calories

* with pita. ** with pita, rice or potatoes, & side salad.

INDIAN

Palak Paneer*
1,410 calories



Lamb Vindaloo*
1,170 calories

Butter Chicken*
1,470 calories

* with rice & naan bread.

Chicken Tikka Masala*
1,430 calories



VIETNAMESE

Beef Pho
940 calories



Chicken Chao
530 calories

Pork Vermicelli
900 calories

Chicken Lo Mein
960 calories

Lemongrass Chicken
1,270 calories



Photos: fotolia.com and (where noted) CSPI, Greek Salad: ©Jacek Chabaszewski (salad), ©starkovphoto (pita), Moussaka: Camilla Peterson/CSPI (moussaka, salad, pita), ©Froggy (potatoes), Palak Paneer: ©uckyo (paneer), ©farbled_01 (rice/bread), Tikka Masala: ©Alexandra Yakovlev, Pho: ©Arenacreative, Lemongrass Chicken: ©nipaporn (rice), ©joesive47 (chicken).

MEXICAN

Chicken Fajitas

1,320 calories



Beef Tacos

870 calories

Bean Burrito

1,190 calories

Nachos

2,170 calories

Quesadilla

1,070 calories



THAI

Chicken Pad Thai

1,480 calories



Vegetable Red Curry*

870 calories

Chicken Kaprao*

1,050 calories

Beef Macadamia*

1,300 calories

* with rice.

Drunken Noodles with Chicken

1,120 calories



JAPANESE

Vegetable Tempura

1,180 calories



Beef Yaki Udon

790 calories

Chicken Teriyaki

1,150 calories



CHINESE

General Tso's Chicken*

1,960 calories



Beef and Broccoli*

830 calories

Kung Pao Chicken*

1,150 calories

Pork Fried Rice

1,670 calories

Peking Duck (½ order)

1,750 calories

* with rice.

ITALIAN

Lasagna*

1,530 calories



Spaghetti and Meatballs*

1,450 calories

Veal Marsala**

1,570 calories

Eggplant Parmesan**

1,950 calories

Fettuccine Alfredo*

2,270 calories

* with bread.

** with bread & a side of pasta.

Source: JAMA Intern. Med. 173: 1292, 2013 (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23700076).

LOWERING CHOLESTEROL

Can supplements help?

BY DAVID SCHARDT

Statins can slash LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by 40 to 60 percent. But some people prefer to avoid prescription drugs.

While no cholesterol-lowering supplement can match the potency (or purity) of a statin, a few offer modest help. Others promise to but don’t.



RED YEAST RICE

Effective, but dosages unpredictable.

Red yeast rice contains small amounts of naturally occurring statin-like compounds. In four good studies, LDL cholesterol dropped by an average of 20 percent in people who took 1,200 to 3,600 milligrams a day of red yeast rice for two to six months.¹

Heads up. According to consumerlab.com (an independent laboratory that analyzes supplements), only three of nine brands tested contained enough of the LDL-lowering compounds to match what was used in good studies. What’s more, some brands had 300 times more of the active ingredients than others, and the amounts in some brands varied dramatically from year to year. Compounding the problem: most labels don’t list the amounts of the active ingredients.

¹ PLoS ONE 9: e98611, 2015.



CHROMIUM

Ineffective.

In nine studies of people with prediabetes or diabetes (who are at high risk for heart disease), those who took 160 to 1,000 micrograms of chromium every day for 5 to 26 weeks had no lower LDL than those who took a placebo.¹

¹ Diabetes Care 30: 2154, 2007.



NIACIN

Effective, but use under medical care.

Very large doses—1,500 to 2,000 mg a day—of niacin lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and triglycerides, raise HDL (“good”) cholesterol, and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Heads up. Niacin therapy slightly increases the risk of liver disease. And in two studies, it may have increased the risk of diabetes, GI bleeding, and stroke.^{1,2} The people in the studies were also taking other drugs, though, so it’s not clear that niacin was responsible.

¹ N. Engl. J. Med. 365: 2255, 2011. ² N. Engl. J. Med. 371: 203, 2014.



POLICOSANOL

Ineffective.

Why do some companies still use this discredited extract of sugar cane wax? After Cuban researchers published studies 15 years ago claiming that policosanol was as powerful as statins, 11 trials in the United States, Canada, Italy, Germany, and South Africa all found that it didn’t lower LDL any more than a placebo.¹

¹ Lipids Health Dis. 7: 17, 2008.



PHYTOSTEROLS

Effective.

Phytosterols are plant extracts that keep some cholesterol from being absorbed from the intestinal tract into the bloodstream. That’s probably why so many supplements (and a few margarines, like Benecol) contain them (see p. 11).

Taking 2 grams (2,000 mg) of phytosterols a day lowers LDL by about 8 percent; 3½ grams lowers LDL by about 12 percent.¹ Phytosterols even lower LDL in people who are taking statins, as well as in vegetarians and vegans.

Some labels list phytosterols as plant sterols or stanols. Others use brand names like Reducol, CardioAid, or Cholestatin.

¹ Br. J. Nutr. 112: 214, 2014.



PSYLLIUM

Effective.

Taking roughly 7 grams of the soluble fiber psyllium every day for an average of eight weeks lowered LDL cholesterol by about 11 percent.¹ (That’s around three rounded teaspoons of Metamucil.) Products that contain at least 1.7 grams of psyllium per serving can claim that they may reduce the risk of heart disease. (The FDA assumes that people will consume four servings a day.)

¹ Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 69: 30, 1999.



Picking Phytosterols

BY DAVID SCHARDT

Consuming 2,000 milligrams (2 grams) of phytosterols a day can lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by around 8 percent.

Statins lower LDL by 40 to 60 percent, but some people prefer not to take prescription drugs. If that’s you, you have two options:

■ **Fortified foods:** A tablespoon of Benecol spread, for example, has 500 mg of phytosterols.

■ **Supplements:** Here’s how to avoid being fooled by the labels:

1. Get the right phytosterols. You can buy either *free* phytosterols or phytosterol *esters*. The esters are free phytosterols that have fatty acids attached to them. That makes them disperse more readily in the intestinal tract, says the FDA. It has

proposed that only supplements with phytosterol esters can claim that they help reduce the risk of heart disease, assuming they provide enough.¹ (Fortified foods can make the claim whether their

phytosterols are free or esters.)

A few major brands that contain phytosterol esters: Nature Made CholestOff Plus, Puritan’s Pride Phytosterol Complex, and Now Foods Beta-Sitosterol Plant Sterols.

If the ingredient list doesn’t say that a supplement contains phytosterol (or sterol or stanol) *esters*, assume that it has the free kind, and that it may not lower your LDL.

2. Carry a calculator. The FDA recommends 2,000 mg of free phytosterols a day. Free phytosterols make up 60 percent of phytosterol esters, so if the label lists only esters (see illustration), multiply by 0.6. To get 2,000 mg of free phytosterols, you’d need about 3,400 mg of esters. 🍌

Supplement Facts	
Serving Size: 3 Liquid Capsules Servings Per Container: 60	
	Amount per Serving
Calories (energy)	14.25
Calories from Fat	14.25
Total Fat	1.59 g
Total Carbohydrate	0 g
Total Protein	0 g
Vegetarian Phytosterol Esters	1.5 g
Fish Oil	96 mg

† Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
 ‡ Daily Value not established.



1.5 grams (1,500 mg) of sterol esters means 900 mg of free phytosterols (1,500 x 0.6). Some labels—Benecol, for example—do the math for you.

¹ Federal Register 75: 76525, 2010.

How Cheap Becomes Expensive

You can buy a month’s worth of free phytosterols for as little as \$5. Companies can’t make much money at that price, though. So they add a little of this or that, then jack up the price. (Never mind that free phytosterols may not lower LDL cholesterol anyway.)



Nothing but phytosterols.

Cost for 2,000 mg a day:
\$7 a month.



Phytosterol gummies.

Cost for 2,000 mg a day:
\$27 a month.



Phytosterols with folic acid (less than you’d get in an ordinary multivitamin).

Cost for 2,000 mg a day:
\$39 a month.



Phytosterols with (worthless) policosanol in a chewable wafer.

Cost for 2,000 mg a day:
\$40 a month.



Phytosterols with a little soluble fiber, policosanol, and a tiny amount of unproven vegetable extracts.

Cost for 2,000 mg a day:
\$93 a month.



Winter Salads

BY KATE SHERWOOD

Take my favorite winter produce, dress it right, and you've got three salads that will keep you happy until temperatures start to rise.

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

Clementine & Avocado

- 1 tsp. dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- ¼ tsp. honey
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 cups chopped romaine hearts
- 3 cups chopped radicchio
- 2 clementines, peeled and chopped
- 1 small Hass avocado, chopped
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds

In a large bowl, whisk together the mustard, mayonnaise, vinegar, honey, salt, and oil. • Arrange the lettuce, radicchio, clementines, and avocado on a platter. • Drizzle with the dressing and sprinkle with the pomegranate seeds. • Serves 4.

Per serving (2 cups): calories 180 | total fat 15 g | sat fat 2 g | carbs 13 g | fiber 5 g | protein 2 g | sodium 190 mg

Kale & Cauliflower

- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. mayonnaise
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 cups finely sliced kale leaves
- 3 cups finely sliced cauliflower
- ¼ cup smoked almonds, chopped

In a large bowl, whisk together the lemon juice, oil, mayonnaise, and salt. Season with black pepper. • Toss with the kale and cauliflower and sprinkle with the almonds. • Serves 4.

Per serving (1½ cups): calories 190 | total fat 17 g | sat fat 2 g | carbs 7 g | fiber 3 g | protein 4 g | sodium 240 mg

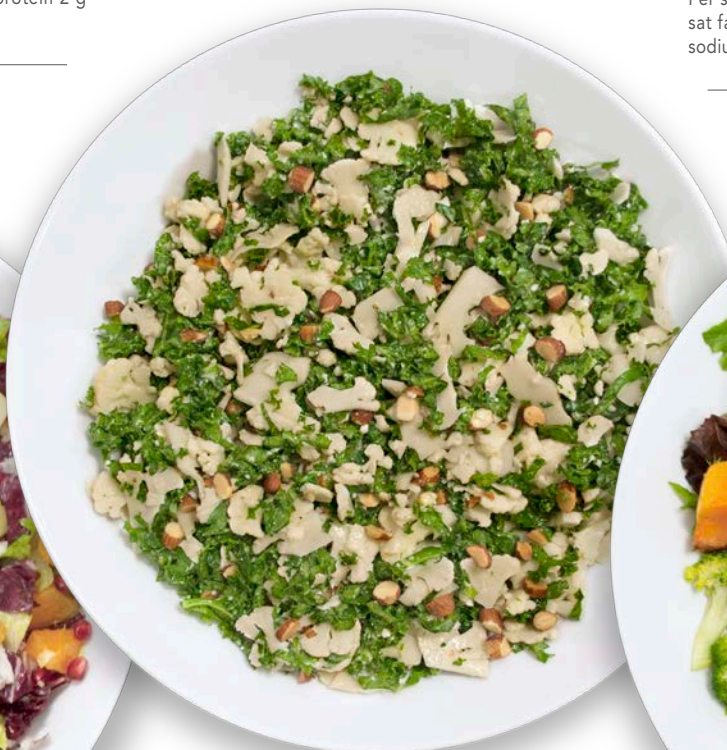


Broccoli & Butternut

- 3 cups cubed butternut squash
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 cups small broccoli florets
- 2 tsp. country dijon mustard
- 1 Tbs. minced shallot
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 4 cups salad greens

In a large skillet, sauté the squash in 1 Tbs. of the oil until just tender, 5-7 minutes. Remove from the skillet. • Sauté the broccoli in 1 Tbs. of the oil until tender-crisp, 2-3 minutes. Remove from the skillet and allow to cool. • In a large bowl, whisk together the remaining 1 Tbs. oil with the mustard, shallot, vinegar, and salt. • Toss with the salad greens, squash, and broccoli. • Serves 4.

Per serving (2 cups): calories 170 | total fat 11 g | sat fat 1.5 g | carbs 18 g | fiber 5 g | protein 4 g | sodium 210 mg



BAR HOPPING

How to find the better bars

BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

It started with candy bars, which begat granola bars, which begat cereal bars, which begat protein bars, nut bars, energy bars, fiber bars, breakfast bars, you-name-it bars.

Let's be clear. Even the best bars don't hold a candle to fresh fruit, vegetables, plain Greek yogurt, or a handful of unadorned nuts. (That's why we awarded no Best Bites, just *Better Bites*.) If none of those will do, a bar could work in a pinch. But are you getting a decent snack or a glorified cookie? Here's the scoop.

The information for this article was compiled by Camilla Peterson and Lindsay Moyer.



Packing Protein?

"Satisfies hunger longer," say Special K Protein Meal Bars. "The fuel you want to help keep you going throughout the day," promise Quaker Protein Baked Bars. Kind's higher-protein Strong & Kind Bars' name says it all.

Let's not get carried away. It's not clear that protein curbs hunger, promotes weight loss, gives you stamina, or builds muscle (see Nov. 2014, p. 1). That said, if your bar is standing

Every flavor's a Better Bite.

in for a mini-meal, it makes sense to look for a good dose of protein.

But protein isn't the whole show. The best bars—protein, nut, whatever—are low in sugar and sat fat and have more than a trivial amount of whole food like nuts, fruit, and whole grains (kernels, not just flour). Why get your protein boost—companies typically add processed soy, pea, or whey protein—from something with a candy-like inside?

Here's how some big brands' protein bars stack up:

■ **Kind.** All five Strong & Kind Bars are Better Bites. The "deliciously savory" flavors—like Honey Mustard and Roasted Jalapeño—have an impressive 10 grams of protein. And their first ingredient is nuts. Just remember that you're paying 230 calories for those 10 grams of protein. You'd get 18 grams in a 100-calorie serving of 0% fat plain Greek yogurt.

■ **ThinkThin.** Most keep sugar—and sometimes sat fat—admirably low. But except for the Protein Nut Bars (which have almonds and pumpkin seeds as the first two ingredients), you're still getting little more than processed protein (and, in many flavors, processed fiber).

■ **Luna Protein.** They've got too much sugar and sat fat, and you could get their added vitamins from a multi.

■ **Nature Valley Protein.** They're low in sugar, except for the two (fake) Greek yogurt flavors, but they're too high in sat fat, thanks to the palm kernel oil coatings.

■ **Quaker Protein.** Too much sugar.

■ **Special K.** The Protein Granola Bars have a measly 4 grams of protein. The Protein Meal Bars have too much sugar and sat fat.

Nothing but Nuts?

"Ingredients you can see & pronounce," boast the Kind Bar labels.



All Kind Nuts & Spices Bars keep the sugar to just 1 teaspoon.

Kind pioneered the modern nut bar, which is basically almonds, peanuts, cashews, or other nuts—sometimes with dried fruit and/or seeds—held together with a syrup (like glucose, tapioca, or brown rice) and/or honey.

A bar made mostly of whole (or chopped) nuts, which pack heart-healthy polyunsaturated fat, beats a bar made mostly of flour (even whole-grain) or other grains, which most people overdo.

What's more, all that chewing may slow you down, allowing your satiety signals to kick in and curb your appetite. And with a bar, you won't just keep munching away, as you might with a jar, can, or big bag of nuts.

But not all nut bars are equal:

■ **Kind.** "Finally, a delicious bar with only 5g of sugar," say the Nuts & Spices Bar packages. Bravo! Three of the nine flavors are Better Bites. Too bad the palm kernel oil coating on the chocolate and caramel flavors gives them too much saturated fat.

■ **Nature Valley.** The Roasted Nut Crunch and Simple Nut are like Kind Nuts & Spices, but with more sugar in a smaller bar (so they taste sweeter). All are Better Bites. The (coated) Nut Crisp gets a Better Bite only because it's even smaller.



Whole nuts and seeds that you can see.

■ **Lärabar.** The Über Mixed Roasted Nut Bar gets a

Better Bite. Other Übers have too much sugar.

■ **Brookside.** Too much sugar for a Better Bite. But the coating is real chocolate (they're made by Hershey), so the sat fat is lower than bars made with palm kernel oil.

■ **Goodnessknows.** Instead of one bar, Goodnessknows puts four "snack squares" into each pack. The entire pack has too much sugar for a Better Bite, but if one square is enough for you, be our guest. They're made by Mars, so—no surprise—the coatings are real chocolate. Too bad the Apple, Almond & Peanut Dark Chocolate flavor has more sweetened rice and sweetened oats than nuts.



Fiber Facts

“A diet high in fiber can help with weight management,” say the Fiber One Chewy Bar labels. “Fiber can help keep your digestive system on track.”

Those claims can appear on labels with little or no evidence. And that’s exactly what there is

for the type of fiber in fiber bars. It’s mostly chicory root fiber or inulin or oligofructose, which are largely good for giving you gas. (Just a hunch that’s not the track you wanted to keep your digestive system on.)

Want to “manage” your weight? Eating whole, intact fruits and vegetables might help, largely because their unprocessed fiber fills you up. Bars that are made with ingredients like chicory root extract, chocolate chips, refined flour, sugars, and palm kernel oil? Not so much.

Kellogg’s FiberPlus and South Beach Good to Go Extra Fiber Bars are Fiber One copycats. “Fiber” is just a buzzword that lets companies sell junk.

Processed chicory root fiber isn’t the kind you want.

Going with the Grain

Granola and “grain” bars are still king of the bar aisle. Most of us eat more grain (especially white flour and other refined grains) than we need. If you’re looking for grains, though, your best bet is intact kernels that are visible to the naked eye. But you can’t just close your eyes and pick:

■ **Kashi.** “7 whole grains on a mission,” says Kashi. (That’s oats, wheat, barley, buckwheat, brown rice, triticale, and rye.) Kashi’s bars are all or mostly whole grain. And all (except the Soft-Baked) feature intact kernels. Most of the Chewy Bars are Better Bites. The Crunchy Bars have a bit too much sugar. Solution: eat just one of the two bars that come in each pack.

■ **Kind.** The Healthy Grains Bars come in 10 trendy flavors like Caramel Macchiato, Maple Pumpkin Seeds with Sea Salt, and Dark Chocolate Mocha. Think Kashi bars gone gourmet. Most are Better Bites.

■ **Quaker.** “Raises the bar,” quip the Quinoa Bar labels. Just not high enough to earn a Better Bite. The problem: too much sugar. Ditto for the Real Medleys Bars.

■ **Nature Valley.** The Granola Thins are low in calories—90 per bar—and (sugar and sat fat) because they’re half the size of most other bars.

■ **Two Moms in the Raw.** Ignore claims like the “anti-aging benefits” of goji berries. All of the company’s Granola Bars are Better Bites, in part because they’re small.



7 whole grains “you can see and taste.”

Blended Fruit & Nut

“The Original Fruit & Nut Food Bar,” say Lärabar’s labels. “Made from 100% real food.”

As long as they contain no chocolate or coconut, every Lärabar (and Clif Kit’s Organic Fruit + Nut and Fruit + Seed Bar) is a Better Bite. A video on Lärabar’s website shows how it blends dried fruit (mostly dates), nuts, spices, and sometimes chocolate into a paste.

If the only sugar in a blended fruit-and-nut bar came from the sugar that occurs naturally in its fruit, we set no limit on the bar’s total sugar. But bars with added sugar—like Pure Organic, with its agave nectar—triggered our 7-gram limit on total sugar (which Pure Organic Bars exceed).



Blended dates, almonds, and unsweetened cherries. That’s it.

Bars for Breakfast?

It all started not with a bar, but with a cookie. In 2012, belVita Breakfast Biscuits stormed the marketplace.



A cookie with added vitamins.

Their “4 hours of nutritious steady energy” claim requires (and has) no evidence. It’s apparently based on the fact that the cookies contain whole grains. No one fed people belVitas to see if they could stay alert, walk, dance, or do anything better than when they got some other breakfast.

Nevertheless, Kind picked up on the “sustained energy” claim. Its Breakfast Bars beat the pack, but the claim is still more marketing than science. And keep in mind: if a bar is your entire breakfast, you’re better off with a protein bar (see “Packing Protein?” p. 13).

■ **Kind.** All five varieties have too much sugar to be Better Bites. But they would meet our cutoffs if you ate just one of the two mini-bars in each pack.

■ **Nutri-Grain.** “Made with real fruit & whole grains,” say all three lines: Crunch, Harvest, and Soft Baked. None are Better Bites. For starters, they all have more sugar than fruit. (That’s also true for Kashi Soft-Baked Cereal Bars and Fiber One Streusel Bars.) And some of the grain in the Nutri-Grain Harvest and Soft Baked Bars is refined.

Trickiest of the lot: the Nutri-Grain Soft Baked Strawberry Greek Yogurt Bar, which has more sugars, corn starch, and palm oil than (heat-treated) Greek yogurt powder or strawberry purée concentrate. Think cookie with added vitamins.

■ **Quaker Oatmeal to Go.** Too much sugar. The Apple & Cinnamon Bar, for example, has nearly twice as much sugar as a packet of Quaker Apple & Cinnamon Instant Oatmeal. 🍌

Passing the Bar

Better Bites (✓) have no more than 2 grams of saturated fat and 1½ teaspoons (7 grams) of sugar (we waived the limit if all the sugar came from fruit). They also have more than a trivial amount of whole food (nuts, fruit, whole grain kernels) and are free of questionable artificial sweeteners. Better Bite protein bars have at least 8 grams of protein. Better Bite granola, breakfast, and fiber bars have little or no refined grain or have whole grains as the first two grains listed. Products are ranked from least to most sugar, then sat fat, then most to least protein.

Granola (weight of 1 bar)	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Total Sugars (g)	Protein (g)
Quaker Chewy 25% Less Sugar (24 g) ^{1,5}	100	1	1	1
Quaker Chewy 90 Calorie (24 g) ¹	90	0	1.5	1
✓ Kashi Chewy—except Cherry Dark Chocolate (35 g) ¹	140	0.5	1.5	6
✓ Nature Valley Trail Mix—Cranberry & Pomegranate or Fruit & Nut (35 g) ¹	140	0.5	1.5	3
✓ Two Moms in the Raw (28 g) ¹	100	0.5	1.5	3
✓ Kind Healthy Grains—except Dark Chocolate Chunk (35 g) ¹	150	1	1.5	3
Special K—Cereal or Chewy (25 g) ¹	100	1	1.5	2
✓ Nature Valley Thins (17 g) ¹	90	1.5	1.5	1
Kashi Crunchy (2 bars, 40 g) ¹	170	0.5	2	6
Kashi Chewy Cherry Dark Chocolate (35 g)	120	0.5	2	5
Clif, mini (28 g) ¹	100	0.5	2	4
Quaker Chewy Caramel Apple (24 g)	90	0.5	2	1
Kashi Organic Chewy Granola & Seed (35 g) ¹	140	1	2	3
Nature's Path Crunch (2 bars, 40 g) ¹	190	1	2	3
Nature Valley Trail Mix Dark Chocolate flavors (35 g) ¹	140	1	2	2
Cascadian Farm Organic Crunchy (2 bars, 40 g) ¹	190	1.5	2	4
Kashi Crunchy Granola & Seed (2 bars, 40 g) ¹	180	1.5	2	4
Kind Healthy Grains Dark Chocolate Chunk (35 g)	150	1.5	2	2
Nature Valley Sweet & Salty (35 g) ¹	160	2.5	2	3
Nature Valley Crunchy (2 bars, 42 g) ¹	190	1.5	2.5	3
Quaker Quinoa (35 g) ¹	150	2.5	2.5	2
Quaker Real Medleys (38 g) ¹	170	1.5	3	3
Bear Naked Layered (40 g) ¹	180	3	3	4
Quaker Chewy Dippys (31 g) ¹	140	4	3	2
Nature Valley Yogurt (35 g) ¹	140	2	3.5	2
Clif (68 g) ¹	250	1.5	5	10

Breakfast (weight of 1 bar)

Kashi Soft-Baked (35 g) ¹	130	0	2	2
Fiber One Streusel (40 g) ¹	150	1.5	2	2
Pepperidge Farm Brightside (45 g) ¹	200	1	2.5	5
Kind Breakfast (2 bars, 50 g) ¹	220	1	2.5	4
Nature Valley Soft-Baked Oatmeal Squares (35 g) ¹	150	1.5	2.5	2
Nutri-Grain Soft Baked (37 g) ¹	120	0.5	3	2
Nutri-Grain Harvest (50 g) ¹	180	2	3.5	4
Nutri-Grain Crunch (2 bars, 42 g) ¹	190	4	3.5	3
Quaker Oatmeal to Go (60 g) ¹	220	1	5	4

Fiber (weight of 1 bar)

Fiber One Chewy 90 Calorie (23 g) ¹	90	1	1	1
South Beach Good to Go Extra Fiber (38 g) ¹	140	3	1.5	7
Fiber One Chewy (40 g) ¹	140	1.5	2	2
Kellogg's FiberPlus—Calcium or ALA Omega-3 (36-40 g) ¹	140	2.5	2	2

Blended Fruit & Nut (weight of 1 bar)

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Total Sugars (g)	Protein (g)
✓ Clif Kit's Organic Fruit + Nut—except Dark Chocolate flavors (46-50 g) ¹	190	2	3.5 ^F	5
✓ Lärabar—Apple Pie, Banana Bread, Blueberry Muffin, Cappuccino, Carrot Cake, Cashew Cookie, Cherry Pie, Lemon Bar, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Peanut Butter Cookie, or Pecan Pie (45-51 g) ¹	210	1	4.5 ^F	5
Pure Organic (48 g) ¹	190	2	4.5	6
Clif Kit's Organic Fruit + Nut Dark Chocolate flavors (46 g) ¹	190	3	4.5	4
Lärabar Chocolate Chip flavors (45 g) ¹	210	3	5	4
✓ Clif Kit's Organic Fruit + Seed (49 g) ¹	180	1	5.5 ^F	4

Nut (weight of 1 bar)

✓ Kind Nuts & Spices—Cashew & Ginger Spice, Madagascar Vanilla Almond, or Maple Glazed Pecan & Sea Salt (40 g) ¹	210	1.5	1	6
✓ Kind Fruit & Nut Nut Delight (40 g)	210	2	1	6
Kind Nuts & Spices Dark Chocolate flavors (40 g) ¹	200	3.5	1	6
✓ Nature Valley Simple Nut (33 g) ¹	180	1.5	1.5	6
✓ Lärabar Über Mixed Roasted Nut (40 g)	230	2	1.5	6
✓ Nature Valley Roasted Nut Crunch (35 g) ¹	190	2	1.5	6
✓ Nature Valley Nut Crisp (25 g) ¹	140	2	1.5	4
Kind Plus—Antioxidants, Fiber, or Omega-3 (40 g) ¹	190	1.5	2.5	4
Special K Chewy Nut (33 g) ¹	160	2	2.5	4
Clif Organic Trail Mix (40 g) ¹	190	2.5	2.5	5
Lärabar Über—except Mixed Roasted Nut (40 g) ¹	210	2.5	2.5	5
Kind Fruit & Nut—except Nut Delight (40 g) ¹	190	3	2.5	4
Food Should Taste Good Real Good Bar (40 g) ¹	220	4.5	2.5	4
Goodnessknows (34 g) ¹	150	1.5	3	3
Brookside Dark Chocolate Fruit & Nut (39 g) ¹	180	2	3	4

Protein (weight of 1 bar)

ThinkThin High Protein (60 g) ¹	240	3	0	20
ThinkThin Protein & Fiber (40 g) ¹	150	2	1	10
✓ Kind Strong & Kind (45 g) ¹	230	1.5	1.5	10
✓ ThinkThin Protein Nut Original Roasted Almond (40 g)	190	1.5	1.5	9
Special K Protein Granola (27 g) ¹	110	1.5	1.5	4
✓ Kind Plus Almond Walnut Macadamia (40 g)	200	2	1.5	10
South Beach Good to Go Extra Protein (38 g) ¹	150	3	1.5	10
Fiber One Protein (33 g) ¹	140	3.5	1.5	6
ThinkThin Protein Nut—except Original Roasted Almond (40 g) ¹	190	3	2	9
Kellogg's FiberPlus Protein (40 g) ¹	170	3.5	2	10
Nature Valley Protein (40 g) ¹	190	3.5	2	10
Cascadian Farm Organic Protein (50 g) ¹	250	2.5	2.5	9
Rise Protein (60 g) ¹	280	1.5	3	17
Luna (48 g) ¹	190	2.5	3	9
Quaker Protein Baked (47 g) ¹	190	1.5	3.5	10
Luna Protein (45 g) ¹	180	3.5	3.5	12
Special K Protein Meal (45 g) ¹	180	3.5	3.5	10
Lärabar Alt Protein (50-60 g) ¹	250	3	4.5	10

✓ Better Bite. ¹Average. ⁵Contains sucralose. ^FAll the sugar occurs naturally in the bar's fruit. Note: To convert teaspoons of sugar to grams, multiply by 4.2.

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

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



RIGHT STUFF

Power to the People



“Toss it. Blend it. Sauté it.”

What to do with **Mann's Power Blend** is as straightforward as what's in it. That would be shredded brussels sprouts, napa cabbage, kohlrabi, broccoli, carrots, and kale, all washed and ready to go.

The most challenging part of your prep? Opening the bag of “superfood vegetables high in Vitamin A & C.”

No kidding.

A 1½-cup serving—about a quarter of the bag—delivers 90 percent of a day's vita-

min A and 80 percent of a day's vitamin C, plus 10 percent of a day's folate and 3 grams of fiber. And you get all that for just 30 calories. So go ahead... pour out a little more.

What to do with your winter-garden-in-a-bag? Where do we begin? A few suggestions from Mann's and from our Healthy Cook, Kate Sherwood:

■ **Toss** into your favorite salad, soup, omelet, or scramble. Or turn into coleslaw by mixing with an Asian or creamy dressing and shredded apple.

■ **Blend** with vanilla yogurt, skim milk, bananas, and berries.

■ **Sauté** with garlic in olive oil and season with a pinch of salt and a twist of black pepper. Or stir-fry quickly in olive oil in a hot skillet and season with a splash of teriyaki sauce.

Can't find Mann's? Your local supermarket may have its own version. Or if you're near a **Trader Joe's**, pick up a bag of its **Cruciferous Crunch collection** (kale, brussels sprouts, broccoli, and green and red cabbage).

When was the last time you gathered all those veggies yourself and started shredding?

veggiesmadeeasy.com—(800) 285-1002



FOOD PORN

Not So Perfect

There's a cake crisis out there.

“Current cake mixes on the market serve about a dozen people,” notes the **Duncan Hines** press release. “As a result, people don't bake cakes as much for everyday occasions, because much of the cake ends up being thrown out.”

Solution? **Perfect Size**, “a complete baking kit designed to serve two to four people.”



Just unwrap the mix, frosting, and disposable pan—“Everything you need to create special desserts everyday.” Everything but the calculator, that is. The kit that's designed to serve two to four people has a serving size of a *fifth* of the package.

If you cut your Golden Fudge cake into four quarters (they'll be small), you're looking at 440 calories, 11 grams of saturated fat (half a day's worth), and 10 teaspoons of added sugars.

If your perfect size is half a cake (as it will be for many), you can double those numbers. That's like eating seven Hostess Ho Hos or four Krispy Kreme Chocolate Iced Glazed Doughnuts.

But what do you expect when you're adding butter and egg to a pile of sugar, white flour, and artificial food dyes?

Other Perfect Size cakes are no better. Caution: the lowish-looking numbers on the front of the box are for the cakes “as packaged,” not “as prepared.” Unless you eat the cake and frosting powder right out of the box, ignore them.

Perfect Size? For this cake, we'd go with zero.

duncanhines.com—(800) 362-9834

DISH of the month



Roast Butternut Squash

Preheat oven to 425°. Whisk together 2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar, 2 Tbs. olive oil, 1 Tbs. brown sugar, and 1 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce. Toss with a seeded butternut squash cut into ½-inch slices. Roast on a foil-lined baking sheet until tender, about 40 minutes. Serves 6.

quick tip

Avoid artificial food dyes whenever you can. The three most widely used ones—Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6—can trigger hyperactivity in children and might contain cancer-causing contaminants.