

Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

STACKING THE DECK?

How industry funding can influence science and create confusion

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MEMO FROM MFJ

Conflict Resolution



Industry's influence on science is a growing problem, as this month's cover story interview with New York University nutritionist-provocateur Marion Nestle makes clear.

Scientific research provides the foundation for government policies and advice to the public. That has led many industries to hire their own experts. But we know who they are, so we can subject their findings to a little "extreme vetting."

The problem is that industry's influence extends far beyond deploying its own scientists, as Nestle notes.

For example, companies sponsor research by scientists whose published papers don't always disclose the industry links. Or scientists who conduct independently funded research are paid (or unpaid) advisors to food, drug, tobacco, or other companies.

When those scientists publish a paper or are quoted in the media, the ties to industry are often kept secret. The researchers aren't stupid: They know that disclosing a conflict of interest could undermine their credibility.

Some companies go further. They give grants to nonprofit health, environmental, and other organizations. Generous, yes. But the funding makes it harder for those groups to criticize the people who are handing them checks.

Or companies set up their own wholesome-sounding, but far from independent, organizations. Names like the Global Energy Balance Network or American Council on Science and Health or Center for Consumer Freedom have a nice ring to them. But they're often just shells for industry. And the public hasn't a clue.

("Selfish Giving," a 2013 report by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher, exposed how the soft-drink industry funds health, minority, and other groups.)

I've had many debates on TV and in newspapers with academics who fail to disclose their conflicts of interest. The reporters or interviewers typically don't let their readers or viewers know about the industry ties. Most leave it to me to spill the beans.

It's not that industry-funded research or scientists are always wrong and independent research is always right. That's hardly the case. But the design or interpretation of research funded by industry is often skewed.

You can't blame companies for trying. After all, they're in the business of making money and have to fend off critics and defend their interests.

What's the solution?

For starters, scientific journals should require authors to disclose all relationships with industry. The National Library of Medicine's invaluable PubMed, which indexes articles from thousands of reputable scientific journals, should disclose all authors' funding.

And the media should let readers and viewers know when scientists or studies are funded by companies.

Science should be used (to coin a phrase) in the public interest, not to maximize the bottom line.



Good deed. Even better marketing.

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., President
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STACKING THE DECK?

How industry funding can influence science and create confusion



Marion Nestle is the Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health at New York University. She is the author of nine books, including *Soda Politics*:

Taking on Big Soda (and Winning) (Oxford, 2015) and *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* (Berkeley, 2007). She is currently writing a book tentatively titled *Buying Nutrition Science*. You can read her blog at foodpolitics.com. Nestle spoke to *Nutrition Action's* Bonnie Liebman.

Q: Does industry funding influence scientists?

A: Yes. Study after study and commentary after commentary shows that it does. It's been seen with research on tobacco, chemicals, energy, and pharmaceutical drugs, which are the closest to foods.

The research on Big Pharma's influence on physicians' prescribing practices or research goes back 40 years. There is evidence that just a tiny gift from a drug company—a pen and a pad of paper—is enough to change prescribing practices. And the physicians don't have a clue.

Q: They're not aware of the influence?

A: No. It's unconscious. They think other people are influenced by industry funding, but they're not. They have no intention of selling out. In fact, they deny it vehemently.

Often, they didn't approach food companies for research funding with the idea that they were going to be bought or working for the companies' interests.

That wasn't the intention. The intention was just to get money for research. The influence is unrecognized, unintentional, and unconscious.

Q: What did your informal research show?

A: For a year, I collected studies that were funded by the food industry. This was a casual collection. I got the studies from reading journals, and sometimes friends sent them to me.

I found 168 studies, and 156 of them had results that were favorable to the sponsor. Only 12 didn't.

Q: Do systematic reviews agree?

A: Only about a dozen reviews have looked. Most of the evidence is consistent with what drug studies show. They find that industry-funded studies are more likely to favor the funders' products. This has been shown so many times that it's a given. Exceptions exist, but they are rare.

Q: How much is industry involved?

A: It's almost impossible to get evidence for that, because you're not there while the

studies are being done.

But some e-mails have been revelatory. For example, in 2015, the *New York Times* obtained e-mails revealing that Coca-Cola was closely involved with researchers whose studies were aimed at minimizing the effects of sugary drinks on obesity.

Q: What about the recent study claiming that advice to eat less sugar is based on weak research?

A: The authors said that the study's sponsor—ILSI, the International Life Sciences Institute, which is funded by food and soda companies—had nothing to do with the study. But Candice Choi, an AP reporter, had [e-mails](#) showing that the funder had a lot to do with the study. ILSI's executive director essentially said, "We dreamed up the whole thing."

Q: How can funders skew the results?

A: Neal Barnard, who heads the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, has explained how researchers can manipulate egg studies, for example, in order to show



Low-Carb Miracle?

"Low-carb diet proves more effective for weight loss than a low-fat one," ran the [headline](#) on MedicalDaily.com. "What does this mean for obese Americans?"

Not much. The meta-analysis found that low-carb diets led to four more pounds of weight loss than low-fat diets...in people who averaged 200 pounds.¹

The meta-analysis had other shortcomings. Unlike similar reports, it included studies that lasted less than six months. And it included studies that only reported on completers and ignored the dropouts. That can make the diet look more successful. Even so, the bottom line was, well, pretty thin.

Funding: Atkins Nutritionals, which sells low-carb foods and diet plans. One author is the only employee of ExVivos, LLC, which paid the other two authors. —B.L.

¹ [PLoS ONE 2015. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0139817](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0139817).

Brain-Boosting Chocolate?



"Step aside energy drinks," ran the [headline](#) in Food Navigator, an online industry newsletter. "Chocolate has a stimulating effect on human brains, says Hershey-backed study."

The study was published in *NeuroRegulation*, which isn't among the 30,000 journals indexed in PubMed, the nation's largest database for medical research.¹

The researchers measured changes in EEG recordings (brain waves) in people given about 2½ ounces of chocolate, not whether chocolate improved performance or alertness. Even if it did, would it be worth the 350 calories and 8 teaspoons of sugar, when a few sips of calorie-free coffee might do the same?

"Chocolate is indeed a stimulant and it activates the brain in a really special way," said co-author Larry Stevens, a professor of psychological sciences at Northern Arizona University, in a [press release](#). Yes, very special.

Funding: "Grateful appreciation is expressed to Dr. Debra Miller and to the staff at The Hershey Company for their guidance and support throughout this project and for their careful review of this manuscript prior to submission." —B.L.

¹ [NeuroRegulation 2: 3, 2015](#).

that eggs don't raise blood cholesterol.

You can use a small number of people, so the differences are not significant. Or you can compare eggs to foods that are high in saturated fat, which raises cholesterol even more. Or you can cut calories: Weight loss lowers cholesterol, so the impact of eggs is blunted.

Q: Or researchers can do studies on what are called free-living people?

A: Yes, meaning the researchers didn't control their diets. The older studies controlled everything people ate, and those studies showed a bigger effect of eggs on blood cholesterol.

As time went on, more and more of the studies were funded by the egg industry. And those found no problem with eggs.

It's a question I get asked all the time: What's wrong with the research? It often looks like it's conducted well.

Q: Can't reporters pick up the flaws?

A: Even *I* can have trouble. Sometimes it's obvious, but sometimes it's not. And there may be nothing wrong with the way the science is done. It's how the question was asked, the research was designed, or the results were interpreted that counts.

Or you could have a result that's equiv-

ocal, but you spin it positively. I saw many examples of that in the 156 studies I collected.

WHO FUNDS STUDIES

Q: Which food industries fund research?

A: It's hard to think of a food industry that *doesn't*. They've figured out that if they have a product that looks bad, they can do research to cast doubt on that science and highlight the food's benefits. This includes sugar, chocolate, Coca-Cola, beef, pork, and dairy.

Q: What about studies on healthier foods?

A: There's also research on blueberries, almonds, cashews, pecans, avocados, pomegranates. That's so they can advertise them as superfoods. And it works. It saved the Maine blueberry

industry. Someone found out that blueberries had a lot of antioxidants, and they started advertising.

Q: Why is there so much nut research?

A: The executive director of the Georgia Pecan Growers Association once asked me for help in proving that pecans were fabulously nutritious. I asked why.

And he said, "We want to sell more pecans." They have a USDA check-off program, in which growers fund advertising, research, and education on pecans.

What you really want is for people to eat a little bit of all of the nuts they like, not just pecans or walnuts or almonds.

Q: At least POM no longer claims that pomegranate juice prevents prostate cancer and heart attacks.

A: POM Wonderful went much too far. It was trying to develop research to advertise pomegranate juice as a superfood.

One meticulous study showed that if you fed pomegranate to rats, their blood antioxidant levels rose. I could have told them that and saved them a lot of money.

Q: What about studies on breakfast?

A: Any time you see a study about breakfast, it's almost invariably funded by a cereal company, because they would like people to think that breakfast equals



The Federal Trade Commission [stopped](#) ads claiming that POM prevents prostate cancer, heart disease, and erectile dysfunction. So ads now just [boast about antioxidants](#).

breakfast cereals.

The studies say, “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” or “Breakfast provides a vast percentage of daily nutrients,” or “Kids who eat breakfast do better in school.”

That last one is certainly true. But there’s independent research showing that it makes no difference whatsoever in adults. I’m not a breakfast eater, so I have a personal bias on this one.

Q: What do industry-funded meat studies show?

A: My collection has studies showing that red or processed meat isn’t linked to a higher risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, or cancer, and that you can eat it with impunity.

The studies cast doubt on the science that meats have any harmful effect on health. The industry has been doing that for years.

Q: How can some studies show that red meat doesn’t raise cholesterol?

A: They ask people to add reasonable proportions of meat to their diets. And guess what? It has no effect.

They’re not talking about the 21 oz. steaks that one of my local restaurants serves. Here again, if the beef industry is funding it, the purpose is to get people to eat more beef. This isn’t about science. It’s about marketing.

WHAT TO DO

Q: What can people do?

A: Be suspicious. Have more than the usual level of skepticism about a single study. Ask a very simple question: Why did this company pay for this study? What does the company get out of it?

Q: Don’t scientists have to disclose their funding?

A: Most journals require disclosure, but sometimes authors forget. And there are seldom consequences if they do.

And even full disclosure doesn’t manage the problem. It lets people think that everything is taken care of.

Worse, there’s a substantial body of research that shows that disclosure may have perverse effects. For some people, seeing the disclosure makes them trust a

study more, maybe because they think the authors are being honest.

Q: Aren’t you in favor of disclosure?

A: Absolutely. But we need a unified disclosure statement, so that everybody has to disclose the same thing.

Q: It’s not just about funding a study?

A: Right. Some conflicts are personal. For example, researchers would have to say that they consult for Coca-Cola, have done research in the past for Coca-Cola, have had travel expenses paid by Coca-Cola, or whatever.

And even when it comes to the study, there are gradations. Do the payments include salaries for the investigators, materials, payments to subjects? Or is it something as little as supplying vitamins?

The drug industry literature says that giving doctors a pen and prescription pad is enough to change their prescribing practices, but if you pay for trips or their

continuing education or for big presents, it has a stronger effect.

Q: Don’t some people charge that industry funding is only one kind of bias?

A: Yes. They argue that all researchers have intellectual conflicts of interest. That’s true. You wouldn’t do science if you didn’t have intellectual interests.

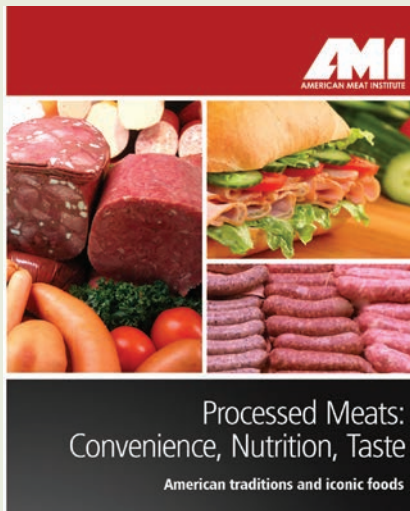
However, those studies are likely to be repeated by people who have different intellectual interests. That’s why in science, one study does not a conclusion make.

But industry funding only has one purpose, and that is to sell food products. That’s the key difference between any scientist’s biases and industry biases.

Q: How do scientists respond to you?

A: Many are offended. “Are you trying to say that all industry funding is bad?” they ask. No. I’m saying that industry-funded research is more likely to be done for marketing purposes. Enormously more likely. 🍷

Baloney Sandwich?



It was the “first report to investigate lunch meat consumption in the U.S. population.”

The results: people who eat lunch meat are no different—in weight, blood pressure, or cholesterol—than those who don’t.¹

Surprising? Nope.

Lunch meats are just one kind of processed meat (others are sausage, hot dogs, bacon, etc.). Unless lunch meats alone had a huge impact on weight, blood pressure, or cholesterol, it’s unlikely that the researchers would find a link.

Better studies ask people how often they eat a food—this one only

asked what they ate the day before—and then wait to see if the frequent eaters are more likely to get a heart attack, diabetes, or cancer. (The International Agency for Research on Cancer calls processed meats a “human carcinogen.”)

The study “may provide insight into how to better utilize lunch meats in the diets of U.S. children and adults,” wrote the authors. Just what we needed!

Funding: North American Meat Institute. Two of the study’s authors are “nutrition consultants and provide services to food industry.” The third is a consultant to the National Pork Board. —B.L.

¹ *Nutr. J.* 14: 128, 2015.

HAVE YOU

BY CAITLIN

Taking Stock

In New York, people line up to pay \$6 to \$8 for a modest-sized cup to sip. The *New York Times* [said](#) it could become “the next magic potion in the eternal quest for perfect health.”

Bone broth—you may know it as “stock”—is made by simmering animal bones for hours.

According to enthusiasts (like Paleo dieters), the gelatin-rich liquid is good for the joints and bones, helps with digestion, and boosts the immune system. But if you’re looking for studies in humans, good luck.

There’s nothing special about gelatin. Like any protein, it’s digested in the GI tract into amino acids, which are then absorbed...like any amino acids.

And gelatin’s amino acids stimulate cells in the stomach’s lining to



produce stomach acid, which aids digestion. But so do all amino acids.

As for immunity: [in test tubes](#), chicken broth impaired the movement of a type of infection-fighting white blood cell. While it seems like that would make it *harder* to fight off infections, it doesn’t matter. Our blood and immune cells never see the broth we eat...because it’s digested first.

Bottom Line: Bone broth may taste good, but a magic potion it’s not.

Bone broth for your joints. Tart cherry juice to help you sleep. Vinegar to get your blood sugar down...and relieve your

Vinegar’s

“I’ve been feeling great and seem to have more energy,” wrote “Robert” on amazon.com after he started drinking apple cider vinegar every day.

If you believe what you read, vinegar—especially apple



cider vinegar—can brighten your skin and remove warts, soothe your sore throat, fight cancer, prevent heartburn, banish belly fat, help your heart, lower your blood sugar, and more.

What’s so special about apple cider vinegar? “Good marketing,” says Arizona State University vinegar researcher Carol Johnston.

Vinegar is acetic acid diluted in water. “And acetic acid is the same in all types of vinegar,” notes Johnston.

Hoopla aside, the evidence so far for vinegar’s benefits is skimpy.

■ **Lowers blood sugar.** About a dozen studies gave 5 to 27 people a starchy meal with or without one or two tablespoons of vinegar. In roughly half the studies, blood sugar was lower in the hours after the meal with vinegar. In the other half, it wasn’t.¹

And in two longer studies that included people with prediabetes, hemoglobin A1c—a long-term measure of blood sugar—was no lower in those who consumed two table-

A Tart Nightcap?

Trouble sleeping? Try tart cherry juice, the “miracle,” “triple-threat sleep aid,” [according to](#) Dr. Mehmet Oz.

The juice’s secret: tart cherries contain melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep and wake cycles.

The evidence? Nothing to lose sleep over.

In a company-funded study, when 15 older adults who complained of insomnia drank 8 oz. of a tart cherry-apple juice blend twice a day for two weeks, their scores on an “insomnia severity index” questionnaire were slightly lower than during the two weeks they drank a placebo beverage. But they didn’t report sleeping any longer, falling asleep any faster, or feeling less fatigued when they drank the juice.¹

In another study, researchers with industry ties measured sleep in 20 young adults with no sleep problems. What that has to do with people who have trouble sleeping is anybody’s guess. And it’s hard to believe what the researchers reported: The volunteers slept about 40 minutes more on the nights they drank tart cherry juice than on the nights they drank a placebo beverage.²

Bottom Line: At about 130 calories a cup, tart cherry juice could end up adding more inches to your waistline than minutes to your sleep.

¹ [J. Med. Food 13: 579, 2010.](#)

² [Eur. J. Nutr. 51: 909, 2012.](#)



YOU HEARD?

KNOW

heartburn...and help you lose weight. Collagen to firm up your skin. Lipoic acid if you have diabetes pain. Is there anything to any of them?

Its Virtues?

spoons of vinegar a day than in those who got a placebo.^{2,3}

■ **Relieves heartburn.** Can a spoonful of vinegar prevent heartburn by restoring stomach acid?

"Heartburn is the result of a relaxed sphincter between the stomach and esophagus, and has nothing to do with the amount of acid in the stomach," says gastroenterologist Scott Gabbard, of the Cleveland Clinic. "It seems unlikely that vinegar would decrease acid reflux back into the esophagus."

■ **Fights cancer.** No studies in people have ever looked.

■ **Helps you lose weight.** Obese adults who consumed two tablespoons of vinegar every day for three months lost just four pounds in a company-funded trial in Japan.⁴ That's the only study.

Bottom Line: The best evidence—though far from solid—is for lowering blood sugar. If you have prediabetes and want to give it a try, make your own salad dressing with at least a tablespoon of vinegar. (Most bottled dressings have too little vinegar.)

If you'd prefer to drink your vinegar, keep in mind that most studies diluted 1 tablespoon in 8 oz. of water. Straight vinegar can burn your mouth and cause ulcers in your esophagus.

And never gargle with vinegar or swish it around in your mouth, as some websites recommend. That can damage your tooth enamel.

¹ *Nutr. Rev.* 72: 651, 2014.

² *J. Func. Foods* 5: 2007, 2013.

³ *World J. Cardiovasc. Dis.* 3: 191, 2013.

⁴ *Biosci. Biotechnol. Biochem.* 73: 1837, 2009.



Collagen Dropout

Collagen pills "help maintain youthful skin by enhancing the structure and volume of skin," [claims](#) Doctor's Best, the leading brand. If only.

Skin mostly consists of the protein collagen, which over time becomes fragmented, like a fraying rope. We also produce less of it as we age. The result: wrinkled and less-firm skin.

"Research has shown that if you improve your collagen, your skin will look better," says Gary

Fisher, professor of molecular dermatology at the University of Michigan. But taking collagen or its building blocks (amino acids) is unlikely to help.

Collagen, like any protein, gets broken down during digestion into amino acids, which are used to make new proteins—collagen or others, depending on what your body needs.

"But our body's machinery that makes collagen doesn't work as well as we age," says Fisher. "So unless your diet is deficient, loading up on more amino acids by taking collagen supplements is not likely to do anything."

Supplements like Doctor's Best contain peptides: short chains of two or three amino acids. "But enzymes in the intestinal cells break peptides down into single amino acids," says protein researcher Paul Moughan, of Massey University in New Zealand. "And that's primarily what you will absorb."

Bottom Line: Want to protect your skin? Invest in a broad-spectrum sunscreen, not collagen supplements.

Lipoic Service

"The 'sparks' in my feet, legs and hands have dropped dramatically from several a day to a few a week." That was "Mark," commenting on amazon.com after a month of taking lipoic acid pills for his diabetic neuropathy.

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy—nerve damage that causes burning or tingling pain and a loss of feeling or weakness particularly in the legs and feet—affects up to 70 percent of older adults with type 2 diabetes.

Doctors use antidepressants, opioids, and other powerful drugs to help relieve the discomfort. (There is no cure.)

So it's easy to see the appeal of supplements like Nerve Renew, which [promises to](#) "improve damaged nerves and let you return to a normal life."

The main ingredient in most of those supplements: alpha-lipoic acid. In studies by researchers with industry ties, lipoic acid given intravenously reduced neuropathy symptoms better than a

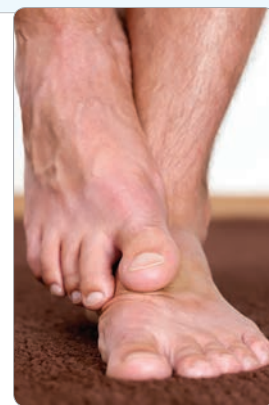
placebo. It also worked—but not as well—in the largest and longest trial that used pills.

Researchers (some with industry ties) randomly assigned 456 diabetic neuropathy patients to take 600 milligrams of lipoic acid or a placebo every day.

After four years, tests showed less severe neuropathy (largely due to less muscular weakness) in the lipoic acid takers, who also reported less weakness but no less pain, burning, or other symptoms.¹

Bottom Line: Taking 600 mg a day of lipoic acid may help relieve some diabetic neuropathy symptoms and appears to be safe. In one study, 1,200 mg a day was more likely to cause nausea. 🍷

¹ *Diabetes Care* 34: 2054, 2011.



GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YOU?

The lowdown on fermented foods

BY LINDSAY MOYER

Fermented foods “have phenomenal benefits in your overall wellness,” [gushes](#) Dr. Mercola. “7 must-eat fermented foods for a healthy gut,” [promises](#) EatingWell online.

Humans have enjoyed fermented foods—from wine, beer, and vinegar to pickles, olives, yogurt, and cheese—for millennia. Before refrigeration, people used fermenting to preserve foods. But can fermented foods make you healthier? Here’s a look at the evidence.

Fermentation starts when microbes—bacteria or yeast—gobble up carbs in fruits, vegetables, milk, or grains.

Over time, the bacteria turn some of the carbs into acids (in foods like sauerkraut), or the yeast turns some of the carbs into alcohol and carbon dioxide (in beer, wine, and liquor). The acids and alcohol help fend off other microbes that would cause the food to spoil.

Does a fermented food still contain live microbes when you eat it? If it has been filtered, heated, or canned, they’ve probably been removed or inactivated.

But foods like refrigerated yogurt, kefir, kimchi, kombucha, and sauerkraut can contain as many as 1 million to 1 billion cells of live microbes in every *gram*.¹ That’s as many bugs as a typical American gets from a whole day’s worth of food.²

Where’s the Evidence?

“Yogurt and fermented dairy is where the lion’s share of the knowledge is on the benefits of fermented foods,” says Maria Marco, associate professor of food science and technology at the University of California, Davis. (Marco’s research has been partially funded by the dairy and olive industries, as well as the National Institutes of Health and others.)

For example, yogurt cultures deliver enzymes to your gut, where they break up the milk sugar (lactose) that some people can’t digest.³ And some studies find a lower risk of type 2 diabetes in yogurt eaters.⁴

But what excites many enthusiasts is the idea that each swallow of yogurt or sauerkraut or kimchi sends an army of probiotics—do-good bacteria—to take up

residence in your gut, warding off disease, obesity, and GI problems.

Not so fast. “Those microorganisms will not colonize and become part of your gut microbiota,” says Robert Hutkins, professor of food science at the University of Nebraska.

“But if you consume a diet rich in fermented foods with live microbes every day, it becomes the near equivalent of having those microorganisms living there.”

What good does that do? For most microbes, the jury is still out.¹ Two examples:

■ **Kombucha.** “ReVitalize. From the Inside,” says KeVita’s website.

KeVita (now owned by Pepsi) makes Master Brew Kombucha. Kombucha is sweet tea plus yeast that ferments some of the tea’s sugar into alcohol and bacteria that ferment the alcohol into acid.

“Vitality begins in your gut,” says KeVita’s website. So should skepticism.

No published studies have tested the benefits of kombucha in people. And only one small industry-run trial in India has tested one of the two microbes that KeVita adds to Master Brew Kombucha after fermentation. (KeVita won’t say exactly how much *Bacillus coagulans* MTCC 5856 it puts in.)

People suffering from diarrhea due to irritable bowel syndrome who were

treated with drugs and 2 billion live *B. coagulans* MTCC 5856 cells reported fewer symptoms after three months than those who got drugs and a placebo.⁵ That’s promising but nowhere near enough evidence.

“There are lots of suggestions for benefits from kombucha, but little evidence to support those claims,” Hutkins notes. “That’s partly because there is no kombucha or sauerkraut lobby to fund studies.”

■ **Kimchi.** Kimchi is spicy fermented napa cabbage. Many Koreans eat it daily. But the evidence for kimchi is skimpy.

Some media reports, for example, say that it lowers blood sugar. Yet in one good study, levels were no lower when 21 Koreans with prediabetes ate fermented kimchi than when they ate unfermented kimchi.⁶

And too much kimchi may have a downside: East Asians who eat the most pickled vegetables like kimchi and other salt-preserved foods have a higher risk of stomach cancer.⁷ (There’s not enough evidence to know whether that’s true in other countries.)

The bottom line: “We need clinical studies to measure what kind of additional benefits beyond the basic nutrition these fermented foods provide,” says Marco.



Can it “revitalize” you? The evidence is slim.

A sip of kombucha while you wait? 🍷

¹ *Curr. Opin. Biotechnol.* 44: 94, 2017.

² *PeerJ* 2: e659, 2014.

³ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 99: 1251S, 2014.

⁴ *BMC Med.* 12: 215, 2014.

⁵ *Nutr. J.* 15: 21, 2016.

⁶ *Ann. Nutr. Metab.* 63: 111, 2013.

⁷ wcrf.org/sites/default/files/Stomach-Cancer-2016-Report.pdf.

THE INGREDIENT GAME

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Those food companies. They just can't help designing labels that trick shoppers who don't know the rules of the ingredient game.

See if you can guess the main (first) ingredient—don't count water—in each of these six foods. Turn the page to see how you did.



Photos: Leah Eitman/CSPi (Ocean Spray), Jennifer Urban/CSPi (all others).



THE INGREDIENT GAME



Main ingredient: Cane sugar.

"No high fructose corn syrup," says the label. Did Newman's Own replace it with honey?

There's some honey in each bottle (not that honey is any healthier than sugar). But the barbecue sauce has more cane sugar, water, vinegar, and tomato paste than honey.

Maybe "SUGAR" in big letters on the front wouldn't sell as well.



Main ingredient: Corn syrup solids.

It's not clear what people expect to find in powdered coffee creamers. But odds are, they don't think it's mostly sugar and oil (largely hydrogenated coconut and palm kernel), especially when the label says "Fat Free."

Oil is, well, fat. But if a food has less than ½ gram per serving (1 teaspoon, in this case), it can call itself "fat free."

Of course, many people add more than 1 teaspoon to their hefty coffee mugs. Why not? It's fat-free!



Main ingredient: Sugar.

"Treat yourself with blissfully indulgent flavors of ripe raspberry and rich dark chocolate," says the bag.

And you do get the flavors of raspberry and "rich dark" chocolate. But that's about all. The scientists at Smartfood—now owned by Frito-Lay—have figured out how to make sugar, oils (palm kernel, palm, and canola), cocoa powder, natural flavors, caramel color, and beet juice extract seem like ripe raspberries and luscious chocolate.

They don't call themselves Smart for nothin'.



Main ingredient: Grape juice.

Expecting mostly cranberry juice? Maybe the pictures of cranberries and raspberries on the front threw you off. Or the "100% Juice Cranberry Raspberry" in large type.

In fact, you're getting more grape and apple juice than cranberry or raspberry juice. Ocean Spray's clues: the front label says "flavored blend of 4 juices" and "Cranberry Raspberry flavor."

Surely, that's not meant to trick anyone.



Main ingredient: Stone ground corn.

You weren't expecting the main ingredient to be sweet potatoes, were you?

True, the front label makes it look like each chip has a couple of slices of the vitamin-rich veggie. And in the photo on the back, the sweet potato slices dwarf the corn.

Turns out the chips are mostly corn and oil. Then come sweet potatoes, sugar, and salt. Each serving (12 chips) has just 8 percent of a day's vitamin A. That means it contains roughly half a teaspoon of sweet potato.

"The good, good stuff," says the label. Just not much of it.



Main ingredient (after water): Organic cane sugar.

"Better fruit. Better juice," says the label. "From the sun-drenched fields of California, strawberries so sweet we had to marry them with a tart splash of lemon juice."

Umm... Maybe those strawberries are sweet because Strawberry Paradise has more sugar than strawberries.

See the tiny print on the front that says "strawberry flavored juice drink in a blend with organic lemon juice concentrate"? A juice "drink" typically means a little juice plus a lot of sugar and water. This one is only 20 percent juice.

Purity? Really? 🍓

Fish Oil & Asthma



One in five young children have asthma or wheezing. Fish oil may cut the risk in those whose mothers eat little or no fatty fish.

Danish researchers randomly assigned roughly 700 women in their 24th week of pregnancy to take either fish oil (1,320 milligrams of EPA and 900 mg of DHA) or a placebo every day until a week after their children were born. Then the scientists followed the children for five years.

Those whose mothers were given fish oil had a 31 percent lower risk of asthma or persistent wheezing. Further analyses showed that fish oil only helped the children of mothers who started the study with low blood levels of EPA and DHA. Fish oil cut their risk of asthma or persistent wheezing by 54 percent.

The children of the fish oil takers also had a 25 percent lower risk of lower respiratory tract infections (bronchiolitis or pneumonia)—but no lower risk of eczema, allergic sensitization, or asthma exacerbations—than the children of the placebo takers.

What to do: Talk to your doctor about taking a fish oil supplement if you're in your third trimester and don't eat much fatty fish like salmon or sardines. Since 2014, experts have advised pregnant women to eat two to three servings a week of low-mercury seafood. (Tuna and swordfish are high in mercury.)

In this study, the Danish women with low blood levels of EPA and DHA averaged less than 320 mg a day from their food. A 4 oz. serving of salmon ranges from 700 mg (for canned pink) to 2,400 mg (for farmed Atlantic).

This study used a high dose of fish oil—about 20 times the usual U.S. intake. “It is possible that a lower dose would have sufficed,” wrote the authors.

N. Eng. J. Med. 375: [2530](#), [2596](#), [2599](#), 2016.

More Reasons to Reduce Red Meat

Red meat harms the planet and may raise your risk of colorectal cancer, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes.

And that's not all.

Researchers followed roughly 46,500 men for 26 years to track the incidence of diverticulitis, which occurs when small pockets or bulges lining the large intestine become inflamed.

Those who ate the most red meat (about 12 servings a week) had a 58 percent higher risk of diverticulitis than those who ate the least (about 2 servings a week).

In a second study, scientists followed roughly 14,000 people for 20 years to look for links with peripheral artery disease. PAD, which is usually caused

by clogged arteries in the legs, leads to cramping, pain, or fatigue while walking or climbing stairs.

Those who consumed the most red meat (at least 11 servings per week) had a 66 percent higher risk of PAD than those who consumed the least (no more than about 3 servings a week).

What to do:

Replace red meat with fish, poultry, beans, tofu, nuts, or other protein foods.



Gut 2017. doi:10.1136/gutjnl-2016-313082.

Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2017. doi:10.3945/ajcn.116.137497.

Testosterone Boost

Losing excess weight can help men with sexual and urinary problems linked to low testosterone levels. Do some diets work better than others?

Researchers assigned 118 overweight or obese men to a lower-calorie, lower-fat diet that was higher in either protein or carbs. Roughly 20 percent of the men had low testosterone levels and 25 percent reported erectile dysfunction.

After a year, testosterone rose in both groups, which each averaged a 23-pound weight loss. Erectile function also improved—equally in both groups—among men who had dysfunction when the study started. The diets had no impact on sexual desire.

What to do: Losing extra pounds may have benefits in the bedroom, no matter which diet you choose.

PLoS ONE 2016. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0161297.

Weight & Cancer Risk

Why does excess weight boost the risk of some cancers? One possibility: extra pounds are linked to the growth of blood vessels that allow tumors to expand.

Scientists randomly assigned roughly 440 overweight or obese healthy women aged 50 to 75 to one of four groups: a low-calorie diet, aerobic exercise, diet plus exercise, or a control. The exercise groups averaged 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous exercise five days a week.

After one year, the diet-plus-exercise and diet-only groups had lower blood levels of markers of blood vessel growth like VEGF (vascular endothelial growth factor) than the control group. Exercise alone didn't lower those levels, possibly because it led to less weight loss.

What to do: Want to lose weight and lower your risk of cancer? Cutting calories is essential. Adding exercise may help, and—bonus!—it should also kick up your health a notch. 🍌

Cancer Res. 76: 4226, 2016.

Low 'n Slow

BY KATE SHERWOOD



The secret to tender, flavorful braised chicken? Leave it on the bone and cook it slowly on a low temperature, so that the sauce just barely bubbles. 🍴

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

Paprika Chicken & Chickpeas

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 bone-in chicken thighs, skin and fat removed
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbs. paprika
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added chickpeas, undrained
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt

1. In a large heavy pot, heat the oil until shimmering hot over medium heat. Sauté the chicken until browned, 3-4 minutes per side. Remove to a plate.
2. Sauté the onion and pepper until they start to brown, 4-5 minutes.
3. Stir in the tomato paste and cook, stirring often, until it starts to darken, 2-3 minutes.
4. Stir in the garlic and paprika and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute.
5. Stir in the tomatoes and chickpeas with their liquid. Return the chicken and any juices to the pot. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and gently simmer until the chicken is tender and cooked through, 15-20 minutes.
6. Season with pepper and up to ¾ tsp. of salt.

Serves 6 and freezes well



Per serving (1 cup): calories 280 | total fat 13 g | sat fat 2.5 g
carbs 22 g | fiber 6 g | protein 19 g | sodium 340 mg



Lemon Garlic Chicken & White Beans

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 bone-in chicken thighs, skin and fat removed
- 8 cloves garlic, sliced
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 3 Tbs. lemon juice, more to taste
- 2 15 oz. cans no-salt-added cannellini or other white beans, undrained
- 2 Tbs. chopped parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¾ tsp. kosher salt

1. In a large heavy pot, heat the oil until shimmering hot over medium heat. Sauté the chicken until browned, 3-4 minutes per side. Remove to a plate.
2. Reduce the heat to low. Add the garlic and sauté until it starts to color, about 1 minute.
3. Stir in the oregano and cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds.
4. Stir in the lemon juice and beans with their liquid.
5. Return the chicken and any juices to the pot. Cover and gently simmer until the chicken is tender and cooked through, 15-20 minutes.
6. Stir in the parsley. Season with pepper and up to ¾ tsp. of salt.



Serves 6 and freezes well



Per serving (1 cup): calories 280 | total fat 13 g | sat fat 2.5 g
carbs 21 g | fiber 6 g | protein 21 g | sodium 330 mg

BREAD WINNERS

How to find the best slices

BY LINDSAY MOYER & BONNIE LIEBMAN

1 Go for 100% whole grains.

Does your bread say “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat” on its label? You’re pretty much done.

If not, the ingredient list should say that the flour is “whole wheat” (or other grains), not “enriched,” “unbleached,” or just “wheat.” Those are all refined. (See p. 14 for tricky claims.)

Our Best Bites and Honorable Mentions are made with grains that are all—or almost all—whole. We didn’t disqualify breads with white flour far down the ingredient list near salt or yeast because there’s so little.

2 Match the serving. If the serving on the label doesn’t match what you eat, do the math. A serving is typically one slice, but most lighter breads list two slices (Arnold Bakery Light, Nature’s Harvest Light, Sara Lee Delightful) or three slices (Pepperidge Farm Light Style or Very Thin).

3 Check the calories. A slice of bread used to weigh an ounce. Now 1¼ oz. is more typical, and some—like Dave’s Killer Bread Organic 100% Whole Wheat and Pepper-

Buying bread should be simple: Look for 100% whole grain without too much salt.

But companies make it complicated. What are shoppers to make of claims like “made with whole grain,” “whole grain white,” “multigrain,” “12 grain,” and “extra grainy,” not to mention “artisan,” “2X fiber,” and “double protein”?

Which matter and which can trip you up?

The information for this article was compiled by Jennifer Urban.

idge Farm Farmhouse 100% Whole Wheat—hit 1½ oz. So your sandwich can rack up 200 to 300 calories just from the bread.

Solution? Dave’s Killer Bread makes delicious Organic Thin-Sliced loaves with just 60 to 70 calories per (1 oz.) slice. Ditto for 100% whole

wheats by Nature’s Own, Sara Lee, and Wonder.

Looking for less? Light breads like Nature’s Harvest Light and Sara Lee Delightful drop to around 45 calories by shrinking each slice to ¾ oz. or less and adding cellulose or other processed fibers.

4 Skirt the salt. Bread doesn’t taste salty, but some types—like sourdough and rye—hit 200 to 250 milligrams per slice. So a sandwich can deliver a quarter of a day’s sodium without so much as a swipe of peanut butter or slice of cheese.

Our Best Bites have no more than 120 mg of sodium per slice. Honorable Mentions can have up to 150 mg. If you’re watching every milligram, Alvarado St. Bakery, Food for Life, and Trader Joe’s make no-salt-added whole wheat breads. But the bland taste takes getting used to.

For some of our Best Bite taste favorites, see below.



With Dave’s, Thin-Sliced equals Best Bite.

Delivers just 80 calories to your sandwich.

Every Pepperidge Farm Whole Grain bread is a winner.

Small slices mean just 60 calories each.

Sweet, hearty, and whole grain. Check the freezer case.

Seedy

"We specially bake each loaf of extra grainy bread so it has a tasty, grainy texture with visible seeds and grains inside & out," says the Arnold label.

The company must be going after up-and-coming Dave's Killer Bread, which is loaded with seeds and grains. But most of Dave's hearty breads are 100% whole grain. In contrast, two of the three Extra Grainy breads aren't.

Pepperidge Farm Harvest Blends are 100 percent whole grain, but none are as seedy and grainy as Dave's.



Not all it's cracked up to be.

Whole Graininess

Beware whole-grainy-ish claims:

■ **"8 grams whole grain."** Grains make up roughly half the weight of bread. So a 42-gram slice should have 21 grams of whole grain. Oops.

■ **"Made with."** It usually means "made with very little."

■ **"Multigrain."** White flour is usually the most abundant. Not in Panera at Home Whole Grain Multi-Grain, though. It's all whole grain.

■ **"Oat" or "Oatmeal."** Whole Foods 365 Steel Cut Oat Bread has just "5g whole grains per slice." That's typical of most oat or oatmeal breads, and it's not much. Pepperidge Farm (100 percent) Whole Grain Oatmeal Bread is an exception.



Steel cut oats? Most of its grain is white flour.

Doubly Good?

Want more protein? Nature's Own Life Wheat+Protein packs 8 grams into each 90-calorie slice. Arnold Whole Grains Double Protein is in the same ballpark.

In contrast, "double fiber" breads from Arnold, Brownberry, Oroweat, and Nature's Own aren't doubly good. Their extra fiber is inulin, polydextrose, cellulose, or other processed fibers, which don't measure up to the intact fiber in bran, whole grains, and beans.



Worth a try if you're looking for more protein.

White Done Right?

"An artisan loaf with five super grains, 10 grams of whole grains and no artificial anything." Our guess: about half of the grain in Dave's Killer Bread Organic White Bread Done Right is whole.

Expect less from Arnold Classic Whole Grain White, Sara Lee Soft & Smooth Made with Whole Grain White, and Wonder Made with Whole Grain White.

Exception: Trader Joe's 100% Whole Grain White Wheat is made with white whole wheat flour. (Yes, there is such a thing.) Does it deliver the same dose of healthy phytochemicals you'd get in ordinary whole grain? Hard to say.



Made with...mostly white flour.

Against the Grain

"Ever avoided bread because wheat makes you feel bloated, tired or just not yourself?" asks BFree Gluten Free Soft White Sandwich Loaf. "Say goodbye to wheat and hello to great tasting bread!"

Hold off on that goodbye. Most gluten-free breads have more potato, corn, or tapioca starch than whole-grain (usually brown rice) flour. Starches are worse than white flour because most have no fiber or protein.

Gotta go gluten-free? Canyon Bakehouse breads have more whole grain than starch.



More tapioca starch than brown rice flour.

Sugar-Free

Most bread has only 2 or 3 grams of sugar per slice. But Nature's Own Life Sugar Free 100% Whole Grain replaces that with a tiny amount of mannitol (a safe sugar alcohol), Nature's Harvest Light and Sara Lee Delightful cut it to 1 gram or less with (safe) stevia, and Dave's Killer Bread Organic Powerseed relies on just 1 gram of sugar from fruit juice.

Should you worry about sugar in bread? Only if you're watching every gram. 🍌



Cuts the sugar to just 1 gram per slice.

No Matter How You Slice It

Best Bites (✓✓) have no more than 120 milligrams of sodium per slice. **Honorable Mentions** (✓) have up to 150 mg. Both are all (or almost all) whole grain. We disqualified loaves made with the questionable artificial sweetener sucralose. Breads are ranked from least to most sodium, then least to most calories. Our numbers may not match what's on some packages due to regional variations and the number of slices per serving.

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
Light or Low Calorie —100% or almost 100% whole grain (1 slice)		
✓✓ Pepperidge Farm Very Thin 100% Whole Wheat (0.5 oz.)	35	60
Pepperidge Farm Light Style 100% Whole Wheat (0.7 oz.) ⁵	45	70
Arnold Bakery Light 100% Whole Wheat (0.7 oz.) ⁵	40	80
✓✓ Nature's Harvest Light (0.8 oz.) ¹	40	85
✓✓ Sara Lee Delightful Healthy Multi-Grain (0.8 oz.)	45	85
✓✓ Sara Lee Delightful 100% Whole Wheat (0.8 oz.)	45	95
✓ Trader Joe's Light Whole Wheat (1 oz.)	40	125

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
Light or Low Calorie —NOT 100% or almost 100% whole grain (1 slice)		
Nature's Own Life—Honey Wheat or Wheat (0.8 oz.) ¹	40	75
Pepperidge Farm Light Style—7 Grain or Soft Wheat (0.7 oz.) ^{1,5}	45	80
Sara Lee Delightful Wheat (0.8 oz.)	45	85

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
Regular —100% or almost 100% whole grain (1 slice)		
✓✓ Food for Life Organic Low Sodium (1.2 oz., frozen)	80	0
✓✓ Trader Joe's Sodium Free Whole Wheat (1.1 oz.)	80	0
✓✓ Alvarado St. Bakery Sprouted No Salt Added (1.2 oz., frozen)	90	10
✓✓ Alvarado St. Bakery Sprouted Flax Seed (0.8 oz., frozen)	50	55
✓✓ Food for Life Organic—except Low Sodium (1.2 oz., frozen) ¹	80	70
✓✓ Nature's Harvest Stone Ground 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	60	90
✓✓ Pepperidge Farm Harvest Blends Ancient Grain (1.5 oz.)	110	95
✓✓ Nature's Own—100% Whole Grain, 100% Whole Wheat, or 100% Whole Wheat with Honey (0.8-0.9 oz.) ¹	60	100
✓✓ Pepperidge Farm Stone Ground 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	70	100
✓✓ Alvarado St. Bakery Sprouted Cinnamon Raisin (1.1 oz., frozen)	80	100
✓✓ Arnold Stone Ground 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	60	105
✓✓ Wonder 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	60	105
✓✓ Dave's Killer Bread Organic Thin-Sliced (1 oz.) ¹	70	105
✓✓ Eureka! Organic Sweet Baby Grains (1 oz.)	80	105
✓✓ Sara Lee Soft & Smooth 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	60	110
✓✓ Eureka! Organic Grainiac (1 oz.)	70	110
✓✓ Pepperidge Farm Whole Grain—except German Dark Wheat (1.5 oz.) ¹	110	115
✓✓ Nature's Own Life Double Fiber Wheat (1 oz.)	50	120
✓✓ Sara Lee 100% Whole Wheat (0.9 oz.)	60	120
✓✓ Oroweat—100% Whole Wheat or Winter Wheat (0.9-1.1 oz.) ¹	80	120
✓ Nature's Own Life Sugar Free 100% Whole Grain (0.9 oz.)	50	125
✓ Arnold, Brownberry, or Oroweat Healthfull—except Oroweat Healthfull Sprouted Wheat (1.1 oz.) ¹	80	135
✓ Arnold, Brownberry, or Oroweat Whole Grains Double Fiber (1.3-1.5 oz.) ¹	90	135
✓ Trader Joe's 100% Whole Grain Multigrain Fiber (1.5 oz.)	100	135
✓ Nature's Own Life 7 Sprouted Grains (1.1 oz.)	90	140
✓ Oroweat Whole Grains—7 Grain, 12 Grain, 100% Whole Wheat, or Healthy Multi-Grain (1.3 oz.) ¹	90	140
✓ Pepperidge Farm Harvest Blends Sprouted Grain (1.5 oz.)	100	140
✓ Trader Joe's California Style Sprouted Wheat (1.2 oz.)	80	150

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
✓ Alvarado St. Bakery Sprouted—100% Whole Wheat, California Style, Diabetic Lifestyle, Multi-Grain, Rye Seed, or Sourdough (1.2-1.5 oz., frozen) ¹	90	150
✓ Nature's Own Life Wheat+Protein (1.1 oz.)	90	150
✓ Arnold Country 100% Whole Wheat (1.5 oz.)	100	150
✓ Arnold or Brownberry Country Honey Whole Wheat (1.5 oz.)	100	150
✓ Arnold Whole Grains Double Protein (1.5 oz.)	100	150
✓ Dave's Killer Bread Organic—Honey Oats & Flax, Powerseed, or Sprouted Whole Grains (1.3-1.5 oz.) ¹	100	150
✓ Pepperidge Farm Whole Grain German Dark Wheat (1.5 oz.)	100	150
✓ 365 (Whole Foods) Multigrain Fiber (1.5 oz.)	110	150
✓ Pepperidge Farm Farmhouse 100% Whole Wheat (1.5 oz.)	120	150
Oroweat Healthfull Sprouted Wheat (1.1 oz.)	80	160
Dave's Killer Bread Organic 100% Whole Wheat (1.5 oz.)	100	160
Arnold or Brownberry Whole Grains—100% Whole Wheat, 12 Grain, Health Nut, or Healthy Multi-Grain (1.5 oz.) ¹	110	160
Trader Joe's 100% Whole Grain White Wheat (1.3 oz.)	90	180
Panera at Home Whole Grain Multi-Grain (1.3 oz.)	100	180
Arnold, Brownberry, or Oroweat Extra Grainy 17 Grains & Seeds (1.5 oz.)	110	180

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
Regular —NOT 100% or almost 100% whole grain (1 slice)		
Wonder Made with Whole Grain White (1 oz.)	70	90
Pepperidge Farm Raisin Cinnamon Swirl (1 oz.)	80	115
Eureka! Organic—Seeds the Day, Smoooooth Wheat, or Top Seed (1 oz.) ¹	80	120
Nature's Harvest—Honey 7 Grain or Honey Wheat (0.9-1 oz.) ¹	70	125
Sara Lee Soft & Smooth Made with Whole Grain White (1 oz.)	70	125
Trader Joe's Organic Multigrain (1.1 oz.)	90	135
Arnold Jewish Rye Melba Thin (0.7 oz.)	60	150
Arnold Classic Whole Grain White (1.2 oz.)	90	170
Dave's Killer Bread Organic Good Seed (1.6 oz.)	140	170
365 (Whole Foods) Steel Cut Oat (1.5 oz.)	120	180
Arnold, Brownberry, or Oroweat Extra Grainy—Cracked Wheat & Oats or Flax & Sesame Seed (1.5 oz.) ¹	120	180
Sara Lee Artesano (1.3 oz.)	100	190
Dave's Killer Bread Organic White Bread Done Right (1.4 oz.)	110	190
Pepperidge Farm Farmhouse Oatmeal (1.5 oz.)	120	200
Arnold Jewish Rye—except Melba Thin (1-1.1 oz.) ¹	80	210
Trader Joe's San Francisco Style Sourdough (1.5 oz.)	90	210
Pepperidge Farm Farmhouse Sourdough (1.5 oz.)	120	220
Pepperidge Farm Jewish Pumpnickel Dark Pump (1.1 oz.)	80	230
Pepperidge Farm 3 Cheese Italian (1.6 oz.)	120	260

	Calories	Sodium (mg)
Gluten-Free (1 slice)		
Schär Artisan Baker Multigrain (1.1 oz.)	90	105
Trader Joe's Whole Grain (0.9 oz.)	60	120
Canyon Bakehouse (1.2 oz., frozen) ¹	80	125
Udi's Whole Grain (0.9 oz., frozen)	70	150
Food for Life Brown Rice (1.5 oz., frozen)	110	160
Glutino Multigrain (1 oz., frozen)	90	170
BFree Soft White Sandwich Loaf (1.1 oz., frozen)	70	180
Whole Foods Sandwich Bread (1.8 oz., frozen)	150	220

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ¹Average. ⁵Contains sucralose. Note: Best Bites and Honorable Mentions are based on whole-grain content and sodium, not taste.

Daily Sodium Limit: 1,500 milligrams.
Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.



RIGHT STUFF

Stir it Up



Feel like eating—but not necessarily *prepping*—a stir-fry tonight?

You don't have to order takeout or settle for pasta, pizza, or some other veggie-poor dish.

Taylor Farms Stir Fry

Kits go from the fridge to lip-smacking good in about 5 minutes. Add some chicken or tofu, and dinner is ready.

Each of the four kits—**Ginger Garlic**, **Mandarin Orange**, **Sesame Chili**, and **Teriyaki**—is filled with a similar mix of fresh broccoli, brussels sprouts, bok choy, cabbage, kale, snow peas, and carrots—all chopped, washed, and ready for the pan or wok.

The main difference: the sauce. Since that's where the salt is, follow the directions to stir-fry the whole bag in 1 Tbs. of oil, but use just half the sauce packet—it would be plenty flavorful with even less.

That way, each serving (about a third of a bag, which cooks down to roughly half a cup) has only 80 or 90 calories, 160 milligrams of sodium (Mandarin Orange) to 240 mg (Teriyaki), and around a teaspoon of added sugar.

Dinner—make that veggie-rich dinner—is ready in minutes.

Is that Taylor-made for you, or what.

taylorfarms.com—(877) 323-7374



FOOD PORN

Big Bake

“House-made beef, veal, pork and ricotta meatballs, Italian sausage, rustic tomato sauce, roasted tomatoes, creamy ricotta, rigatoni.”

Phew.

Good thing **Romano's Macaroni Grill** doesn't sell its **Classic Italian Bake** by the pound.

How clever of Romano's to serve its pile of red meat, white flour, and cheese in a huge “braiser”

dish. That made the 1½ pounds' worth of food we were served at one Washington, D.C.-area Romano's—and the *two* pounds we got at another—look almost normal-size.

Turns out the dish's 1,480 calories, two-day supply of saturated fat (38 grams), and three days' worth of sodium (4,890 milligrams) are as normal as downing an entire (two-pound) family-size box of Stouffer's Meat Lovers Lasagna. M-m-m.

And that's without any antipasti (350 to 1,020 calories), dolce (310 to 940 calories), or drinks.

“At Romano's Macaroni Grill, we know that for our guests any night out is a big night out,” says the company's website.

Big, indeed.

macaronigrill.com—(844) 846-0448



DISH of the month

Lemon-Mustard Lentils

Whisk together 2 Tbs. lemon juice, 2 Tbs. whole-grain mustard, 1 Tbs. minced capers, ¼ tsp. kosher salt, ½ tsp. honey, and 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil. Toss with 2 cups cooked lentils, 1 cup shredded carrots, and ½ cup chopped parsley, dill, mint, and/or cilantro. Serve warm or cold. Makes about 3 cups.

quick tip

You'll deliver a huge flavor boost to soups, pasta sauces, and other dishes that call for fresh garlic if you add it just before the food finishes cooking.

