


Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

BRAIN GAIN

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN



Don't forget
TO
call TOM

NEWS FOR YOUR NOGGIN

"4 simple ways to help keep Alzheimer's out of your future," ran the headline in *Prevention* magazine last year. "Everyone is obsessed with the MIND diet, but what exactly is it?" asked *Women's Health* in January. "Donald Trump credits \$4 billion em-

pire to this pill," reports a supplement ad masquerading as a Fox News report.

Advice for staying sharp is everywhere. Here's a handful of recent findings about memory that you may have missed...or forgotten.

Continued on page 3.

MEMO FROM MFJ

The Supplement Scam



Almost every time I check my e-mail inbox or watch the news, someone is trying to sell me some supplement that will boost my memory, ward off heart disease, or melt away fat. If only they worked as well as the ads claimed!

While I—and, I suspect, you—don't fall for those ads, plenty of folks apparently do.

Maybe they don't know that Congress lets companies market supplements without proving that they're safe and effective. (Presumably, Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, and Donald Trump know, yet they have all lent their names to supplement marketing schemes.)

Senior citizens are often the target. It's no surprise that scores of supplements promise to do away with aching joints, memory loss, and hearing problems. Take Prevagen, a synthetic jellyfish protein supplement that improves memory, according to the manufacturer. Its evidence? A weak study conducted by Prevagen employees.

Hawking unnecessary pills to seniors can do more than just pick their pockets. Researchers recently found a surprising increase since 2005 in the number of older patients who also bought fish oil when they filled a prescription for the blood thinner warfarin. How many people know that mixing the two can lead to bleeding?

Nutrition Action is doing its part by running articles every few months about whether arthritis, blood pressure, or other supplements work and are safe.

So is the Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher. In January [we sued CVS](#) for claiming that its Algal-900 DHA supplement is "clinically shown" to improve memory. Turns out there is no credible clinical evidence, and several

years ago the Federal Trade Commission ordered the maker of the DHA that's used in CVS's supplement to stop making the deceptive claim.

Trying to straighten out the supplement market is like playing Whac-a-Mole, but kudos to the federal government for some reinvigorated efforts.

Last year the Food and Drug Administration uncovered more than 100 supplements with "potentially hazardous" hidden ingredients. Thirty-four "weight loss" products were adulterated with sibutramine, a drug the agency banned in 2010 because it caused heart attacks and strokes.

At the Department of Justice, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch said, "Some of these supplements are simply a waste of money....Some contain harmful ingredients causing consumers to fall ill. Others falsely claim to cure illness and disease."

What's more, she noted, people sometimes take worthless supplements instead of drugs that could treat their illnesses. Her department has brought civil or criminal cases against more than 100 companies.

Bottom line: Americans need a strong law that requires companies to prove that their products work and are safe before they can be sold. But don't hold your breath. The supplement industry has Congress firmly in its pill bottle.

Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D., President
[Center for Science in the Public Interest](http://www.cspinet.org)

Been scammed by supplements?

Send us a note at scammed@cspinet.org or Scammed, CSPI, 1220 L St. NW—Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005.



Ben Carson gave testimonials and paid speeches to a multi-level supplement marketing company.

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BRAIN GAIN

NEWS FOR YOUR NOGGIN

1 Dementia rates are dropping.

The news broke in February. Researchers who had followed roughly 5,200 participants in the Framingham Heart Study since 1975 reported that the incidence of dementia had dropped steadily from 3.6 per 100 people aged 60 or older in the late 1970s to 2.0 per 100 in the early 2010s.¹

“Our study offers hope that some dementia cases might be preventable, or at least delayed,” says Sudha Seshadri, professor of neurology at Boston University School of Medicine, who led the study. What led to the drop?

“There are two principal possibilities, neither of which can be proved,” says David Knopman, professor of neurology at the Mayo Clinic.

“The first is that we’re better at reducing risk factors for cardiovascular disease like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. The second is that the trend in improved educational attainment over time has delayed the symptoms of dementia.”

Unfortunately, the *number* of people with dementia isn’t falling because the older population is growing.

“We are expecting an explosion of dementia over the next 50 years, with devastating consequences on the personal and societal level because our population is aging,” says Seshadri.

“If we can, however, bend the arc of risk so that people get it later, closer to the natural lifespan, then we will be reducing the burden of dementia.”

“What is her name?” “Where are my keys?” “When is that meeting?” If you’re over 50, you’ve been there. (Thank goodness for phone reminders.) But that’s a far cry from having Alzheimer’s or another dementia. What’s the latest on staying sharp? Here are eight recent findings that may surprise you.

2 There are two tracks to brain drain.

To most people, memory loss means Alzheimer’s disease. But to researchers, Alzheimer’s is just half of the picture.

“Ninety percent of the cognitive decline seen in the elderly is due to amyloid or vascular changes to the brain,” says Prashanthi Vemuri, a Mayo Clinic researcher who studies cognitive decline.²

■ **Alzheimer’s.** The hallmark of Alzheimer’s is abnormal fragments of protein called amyloid.

“Amyloid plaques collect in the brain,” explains Vemuri. But amyloid

alone doesn’t cause Alzheimer’s.

“Roughly 30 percent of people aged 70 to 90 have amyloid in their brains, and they’re cognitively normal,” she says.

Amyloid causes trouble when the brain also has abnormal tangles of a protein called tau (see [illustration](#)).

“Amyloid is the trigger and tau is the bullet,” says Vemuri. “Amyloid accelerates the spread of tau throughout the brain.”

■ **Vascular dementia.** “Vascular dementia is due to damage to blood vessels in the brain,” says Vemuri.³

On brain scans, it can show up as infarcts—brain cells that have died from lack of oxygen after tiny blood vessels ruptured or became blocked.

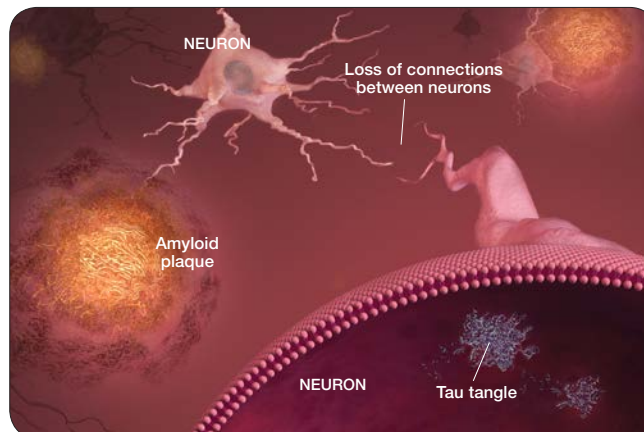
Or it may show up as damage to the brain’s white matter, which contains bundles of nerve fibers.

“The white matter starts deteriorating,” says Vemuri.

As with amyloid, people don’t know that their small blood vessels are damaged. “By age 70, about 15 percent of people have vascular disease in the brain,” says Vemuri. “By age 90, about 70 percent have it.”

And it’s not either/or. Roughly half of people with memory loss have both amyloid *and* vascular damage.

The endpoint is the same, notes Vemuri.



The hallmarks of Alzheimer’s. Excess beta-amyloid may trigger a chain of events that includes tangles of abnormal tau protein and, eventually, damaged nerve cells (neurons).



“Both pathways are linked to slow metabolism in the brain. The brain is like a city of lights, and there is a slowly spreading power failure.”

What’s more, “the neurons start dying and shrinking,” says Vemuri. “Ultimately, it’s shrinkage that causes the cognitive decline.”

3 Blood pressure matters.

Why does damage to small blood vessels in the brain—starting in your 40s and 50s—matter so much for thinking abilities?

“The areas in the frontal lobe of the brain that are most important for executive function, planning, and learning are particularly vulnerable to damage caused by blocked blood vessels,” says Patrick Smith, assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University School of Medicine.

That’s less of a problem in some other parts of the brain. “Areas like the occipital lobe for vision get multiple feeds of blood from different areas,” explains Smith.

But in the frontal lobe, there’s less redundancy. “So you see damage in the watershed brain regions, where a blockage in one part of the artery causes a lot of white matter damage downstream.”

And many infarcts are silent.

“Small infarcts are pretty common, and most people don’t even know they’ve had them,” says Smith. “The same is true with white matter damage. And both are related to blood pressure.”

The DASH ([Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension](#)) diet lowers blood pressure (see “DASH Diet,” p. 6). Could it improve thinking ability?

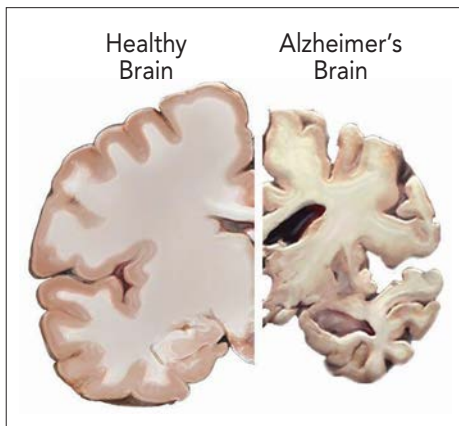
Smith and his colleagues randomly assigned 124 sedentary overweight or obese

adults with pre-hypertension or hypertension to one of three groups: a DASH diet alone, a DASH diet with fewer calories plus exercise, or their usual diet.⁴

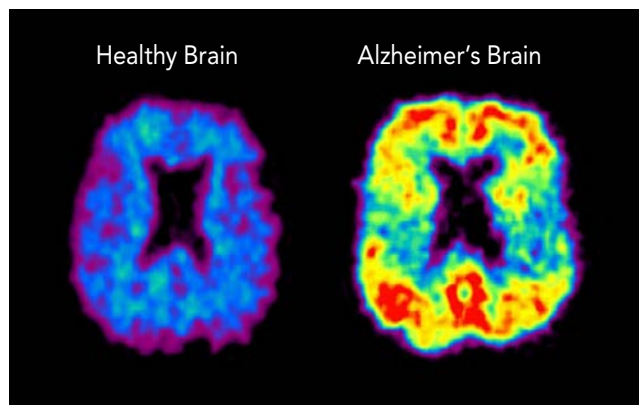
“We were surprised at the results,” says Smith. “Even though it was only a four-month intervention, we saw improvements in executive function, processing speed, and some aspects of learning and memory in the group that got the weight-loss DASH diet and aerobic exercise.” The DASH diet alone only improved processing speed.

“People who started out with greater thickness in the walls of their carotid arteries seemed to experience a greater improvement in cognitive function,” says Smith. “The carotid artery wall is a barometer of cardiovascular risk, so those are people who were at greater risk for stroke or future heart problems.

“One thing that we’ve learned over the past few decades is that progressive cognitive problems happen over the course of decades,” adds Smith. “So controlling your cardiovascular risk factors—getting high blood pressure and high cholesterol into the normal range—could make a big difference over time.”



The shrinking brain. The brain’s white matter shrinks in both advanced Alzheimer’s (right) and in advanced vascular dementia.



Beta-amyloid scan. Researchers can now detect beta-amyloid (red and yellow) in the brain 20 years before people have any symptoms of memory loss.

eyes,” says the Mayo Clinic’s David Knopman. “So why wouldn’t it do the same in the brain? It does.”

A second possibility: “Insulin metabolism might influence Alzheimer’s,” says Knopman. “That one is interesting but more speculative.”

People with type 2 diabetes may have low levels of insulin in their brains.

“Insulin increases some brain enzymes that degrade amyloid,” explains Knopman. “So if diabetes alters brain insulin levels, that could have a deleterious effect on the brain.”⁵

Even people with blood sugar levels that are higher than normal—but not high enough to reach the diabetes range—are at risk.⁶

“Nature doesn’t obey the boundaries set by humans,” notes Knopman. “We may define diabetes as a fasting blood sugar level above 125, but 124 still carries a greater risk than 102.”

4 High blood sugar harms the brain.

High blood sugar threatens your brain. Why?

Researchers are looking into two main possibilities.

“Diabetes causes cardiovascular disease in every other organ of the body—the heart, kidney, and

5 Using your brain delays symptoms.

“If you’ve had a more intellectual lifestyle throughout life—higher education, occupation, and cognitive activities—does it delay your symptoms of cognitive decline?” asks the Mayo Clinic’s Prashanthi Vemuri. “The answer is yes.”

The delay ranges from three to eight years, depending on how much education, etc., you’ve had.⁷

“And the protection is the same whether you have vascular or Alzheimer’s pathology or both,” adds Vemuri. “Your brain is better able to cope with any kind of pathology it gets.”

Unfortunately, all that learning and

thinking doesn't actually change your brain.

"Some people believe that by using your brain, you're getting rid of the toxic stuff," notes Vemuri. "But that's not the case."

Brain scans don't show any less amyloid or damage to small brain blood vessels in professors than in high-school dropouts.

"The brain is still going through the same changes," says Vemuri, "but better-educated people go longer without symptoms." That is, their brains keep working normally.

In any case, what matters is what your brain can do, not what it looks like on a scan. "It can't hurt to keep your mind active," says Vemuri. "It helps delay the onset of symptoms."

6 Brain foods? It's not clear.

"The MIND diet: 10 foods that fight Alzheimer's (and 5 to avoid)," ran the headline on CBSNews.com. "The MIND diet helped slow the rate of cognitive decline and protect against Alzheimer's regardless of other risk factors."

The MIND—Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay—diet is a hybrid of those two diets with a few tweaks. For example, instead of *any* fruit, the MIND diet includes only berries, largely because blueberries seem to help rats find their way through mazes.

The 10 "brain healthy" food groups: green leafy vegetables, other vegetables, nuts, berries, beans, whole grains, fish, poultry, olive oil, and wine. The five unhealthy groups: red meats, butter and stick margarine, cheese, pastries and sweets, and fried and fast food.

The problem: researchers have observed less dementia in people who eat a MIND-like diet *on their own*.⁸ But no one has told people to eat either a MIND diet or some other diet and then tested to see if one group has better memory after several years.

WANT TO HELP?

◀ Back to Stories

Anne is at heightened risk for Alzheimer's and is doing her part to find a cure

Most people wouldn't think twice about forgetting an item at the grocery store or misplacing their car keys, but for people like Anne Kolesar these minor lapses in memory can sometimes feel like potential warning signs, reminding her that she is at elevated genetic risk for Alzheimer's disease.

Anne is all too familiar with the effects of Alzheimer's, which has long afflicted her family. She watched as her father's mental faculties

212,493 people have signed up to help end Alzheimer's. THE NEXT STEP IS YOURS.

E-mail *

First Name *

Last Name *

Zip/Postal Code *

Year of Birth *

Want to help scientists solve the Alzheimer's puzzle? They're looking for people with or without symptoms to participate in studies. A few examples:

■ **Brain Health Registry.** Adults aged 18 to 110 can play online brain games every 3 to 6 months to help researchers track their performance with age.

■ **GeneMatch study.** After you mail in a cheek swab, researchers will determine (but won't tell you) if you have the APOE4 gene, which boosts your risk of Alzheimer's. Open to anyone aged 55 to 75 who has neither mild cognitive impairment nor dementia.

■ **A4 study.** The Anti-Amyloid Treatment in Asymptomatic Alzheimer's study is testing a drug that fights amyloid on people aged 65 to 85. You can only enroll if researchers find that you have signs of amyloid (on brain scans) and no memory loss.

The registry is co-sponsored by Banner Health, Cleveland Clinic, Columbia University, Johns Hopkins University, the Mayo Clinic, and other institutions. For more information, go to: endALZnow.org or call (800) 438-4380.

"People who eat a healthier diet may also have higher socioeconomic status, higher educational status, and may be more likely to exercise or engage in other health behaviors," says Knopman.

So far, the only study that pitted one diet against another was the PREDIMED trial.⁹

Spanish researchers randomly assigned roughly 450 people at high risk for heart attack and stroke to one of three groups. All ate a Mediterranean diet. But those who were given a weekly supply of extra-virgin olive oil and those who were given a weekly supply of nuts (walnuts, almonds, and hazelnuts) for four years did better on several cognitive tests than

a control group (which was told to eat less fat, but didn't).

"The results are promising," says Knopman.

"It's great that they tested cognition at the beginning and the end of the study and that they had a control group. But the study was hardly definitive. The improvements were very modest and barely statistically significant."

Nuts and olive oil may help prevent cardiovascular disease, adds Knopman. "But it's an overstatement to say that either a Mediterranean diet or just the nuts or olive oil makes a difference in cognition."

7 What's best? Do it all.

Instead of testing the brain gains you can expect from a healthy diet *or* exercise *or* brain training, Finnish researchers did it all.

They recruited 1,260 people aged 60 to 77 who had average or slightly below average scores on memory tests *and* had risk factors for vascular dementia like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high blood sugar, excess weight, or a sedentary lifestyle.

Half (the control group) got general health advice. The other half (the intervention group) had their blood

pressure, blood sugar, and other risk factors monitored and received training to:

■ **Eat a DASH-like diet**, with fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and meat, fish at least twice a week, canola oil or margarine (rather than butter), and no more than 12 teaspoons of added sugars and 2,000 milligrams of sodium a day.

■ **Do aerobic exercise** two to five times a week and **strength training** one to three times a week.

■ **Use a computer** for 10 to 15 minutes three times a week to do tasks designed



to improve memory, mental speed, and executive function.

The result: after two years, the intervention group did better on tests of mental speed and executive function, but not memory.¹⁰

“It has been very difficult to prove anything works for reducing dementia or cognitive impairment in a randomized trial,” Miia Kivipelto, professor of clinical geriatric epidemiology at the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, told the website Medscape in 2015.

“Now we have done it. Our results suggest prevention is key. We can do things before memory problems develop to lower the risk.”

Her research team will track the participants for seven years to see if the intervention group has less dementia.

8 Hearing loss may lead to memory loss.

“Hearing loss is strongly linked to a higher rate of cognitive decline and a greater risk of developing dementia over time,” says Frank Lin, associate professor of otolaryngology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.¹¹

And hearing loss is more common than you may think.

“The percentage of people with hearing loss doubles every decade,” says Lin. “By the time you look at adults 70 and older, nearly two-thirds have a clinically significant hearing impairment.”

Poor hearing may not affect your blood vessels or your risk of Alzheimer’s. “Hearing loss may be an independent hit on the brain,” says Lin.

The key theories:

■ **Cognitive load.** “When you have hearing loss as you age, the cells in your inner ear are damaged and can’t regenerate,” explains Lin.

“So instead of sending a crystal clear signal to the brain, the cells send a much more garbled signal.”

Decoding a garbled message takes more effort. “We know from neuroimaging studies that the brain has to work harder to process a degraded signal,” says Lin. “So the brain redeplicates resources to help with hearing, and it comes at the expense of memory and thinking abilities.”

■ **Brain atrophy.** “Hearing impairment may lead to faster rates of brain atrophy,” says Lin. “That makes sense, because if you have a very impoverished auditory signal, those parts of the brain that handle sound will atrophy faster. And those parts also serve other areas of brain function.”

■ **Social isolation.** “For some people, hearing loss leads to a loss of social engagement, which leads to social isolation,” says Lin.

People may feel like a nuisance if

TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN

There’s a good chance that these steps will protect your brain...and your health.

- Control blood pressure and cholesterol with diet, exercise, and (if necessary) medication
- Keep a lid on blood sugar
- Lose (or don’t gain) excess weight
- Exercise 30 to 60 minutes a day
- Eat a healthy diet (see “DASH Diet”)
- Stay mentally and socially active
- Get your hearing checked

IT MIGHT ALSO HELP TO

There’s some evidence, but something else about people who do these things may explain their lower risk.

- Get enough sleep
- Eat more seafood and berries
- Get enough vitamin D
- Consume more caffeine









DON’T EXPECT MUCH FROM

These supplements have failed to help or haven’t been well tested.

- B vitamins
- Vitamins C and E and beta-carotene
- Multivitamins
- DHA
- Phosphatidyl serine
- Vinpocetine
- Huperzine-A
- Ginkgo
- Prevagen

DASH Diet

A DASH diet keeps a lid on blood pressure, which may protect your brain’s blood vessels. Here’s a 2,100-calorie version.

	Daily Servings	
Vegetables & Fruit (1 serving: ½ cup or 1 cup greens or 1 piece fruit)	11	
Grains (1 serving: ½ cup pasta or rice or cereal or 1 sl. bread)	4	
Low-fat Dairy (1 serving: 1 cup milk or yogurt or 1½ oz. cheese)	2	
Legumes & Nuts (1 serving: ½ cup beans or ¼ cup nuts or 4 oz. tofu)	2	
Poultry, Fish, Lean Meat (1 serving: ¼ lb. cooked)	1	
Oils & Fats (1 serving: 1 Tbs.)	2	
Desserts & Sweets (1 serving: 1 tsp. sugar or 1 small cookie)	2	
Wild Card Poultry, Meat, Fish or Oils & Fats or Grains or Desserts & Sweets	1	

they keep asking others to repeat inaudible words, so those with hearing loss often give up and stay on the sidelines.

“They’re less likely to be engaged, which is clearly a risk factor for maintaining cognitive health,” says Lin.

Would a hearing aid delay memory loss? “That’s the big question,” says Lin. He is currently planning a five-year trial to find out. 🍌

¹ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 374: 523, 2016.

² *Brain* 138: 761, 2015.

³ *Stroke* 42: 2672, 2011.

⁴ *Hypertension* 55: 1331, 2010.

⁵ *Eur. J. Pharmacol.* 719: 170, 2013.

⁶ *N. Engl. J. Med.* 369: 540, 2013.

⁷ *JAMA Neurol.* 71: 1017, 2014.

⁸ *Alzheimers Dement.* 11: 1015, 2015.

⁹ *JAMA Intern. Med.* 175: 1094, 2015.

¹⁰ *Lancet* 385: 2255, 2015.

¹¹ *JAMA Intern. Med.* 173: 293, 2013.

Mind Over Body?



Mindfulness-based stress reduction and cognitive behavioral therapy may reduce lower-back pain.

Researchers randomly assigned roughly 340 people with chronic lower-back pain to one of three groups:

■ **Mindfulness-based stress reduction.** For two hours a week for two

months, instructors led participants in stress-reduction techniques like yoga and meditation. A key goal: help people accept physical discomfort and difficult emotions.

■ **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT).** For two hours a week for two months, psychologists taught participants relaxation skills (like abdominal breathing and guided imagery), how to change dysfunctional thoughts, and other strategies to understand and cope with pain.

■ **Usual care.** The control group received \$50 but no training.

After six months, 44 percent of the mindfulness and CBT groups—but only 27 percent of the usual-care group—reported less pain. Similarly, 60 percent of the mindfulness and CBT groups—but only 44 percent of the usual-care group—reported better function.

What to do: If you have chronic lower-back pain, give mindfulness-based stress reduction or cognitive behavioral therapy a try.

[JAMA 315: 1240, 2016.](#)

Walnuts: Healthy but Not Magic

“Handful of walnuts could be a ticket to weight loss and better cholesterol,” reported the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* online in February. Well, not exactly.

Researchers, funded in part by the California Walnut Commission, assigned roughly 210 overweight or obese women to one of three diets that cut calories equally (by 500 to 1,000 a day):

- Lower fat, higher carb
- Lower carb, higher fat
- Lower carb, higher-fat with 1½ oz. of walnuts a day.

All three groups were told to limit saturated fat, to choose healthy carbs like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and to exercise for an hour a day.

After six months, all three groups lost about 15 pounds. (Earlier studies had suggested that insulin-resistant dieters would lose more weight on a lower-carb diet, but in this study they didn’t. However, women who were not insulin resistant when the study started lost more weight on the lower-fat diet than on the lower-carb diet without walnuts.)

LDL (“bad”) cholesterol fell in the lower-fat and walnut-rich groups. HDL (“good”) cholesterol rose most in the walnut-rich group.

What to do: Walnuts can be part of a heart-healthy diet that trims pounds, but they aren’t a “ticket to weight loss.”

[J. Am. Heart Assoc. 5: e002771, 2016.](#)

Arthritis & Vitamin D

Vitamin D doesn’t curb arthritis pain, as earlier studies had suggested.

Australian researchers gave roughly 400 people aged 50 to 79 with arthritis in their knees and low levels of vitamin D in their blood (5 to 24 ng/mL) either a high dose of vitamin D (50,000 IU once a month) or a placebo.

After two years, the vitamin D takers had no less pain and lost no less knee cartilage than the placebo takers. However, vitamin D takers rated their knee function higher than placebo takers.

What to do: Don’t expect vitamin D to curb arthritis pain or damage, though it might make you better able to walk up stairs, stand, or bend. However, it’s worth taking vitamin D to keep your blood levels from dropping. Shoot for the RDA (600 IU a day up to age 70 and 800 IU if you’re older) from a supplement or fortified foods.

[JAMA 315: 1005, 2016.](#)

Diet & Prostate Cancer

Which foods are linked to a higher risk of advanced prostate cancer? (That’s the only kind that matters.)

Scientists pooled data from 15 studies on more than 842,000 men in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

Those who ate at least four eggs a week had a 14 percent higher risk of advanced prostate cancer than those who ate less than three eggs a month. In contrast, those who ate at least four (3 oz.) servings of poultry a week had a 17 percent lower risk than those who ate less than two servings a month.

There was a hint that red and processed meat was linked to a higher risk. Tomatoes weren’t linked to risk.

What to do: Stay tuned. The links with meat, poultry, and eggs were largely seen in North America, so it’s possible that something else about people who eat those foods explains the links. 🍅

[Int. J. Cancer 138: 2368, 2016.](#)

WHAT'S IN IT?

KEY

Propylene glycol. Polysorbate 80. Polyglycerol polyricinoleate. Food manufacturers employ a dizzying array of chemicals to thicken, stabilize, color, and flavor their foods, as well as to replace ingredients like fat and sugar.

Most are safe, but some could pose a small risk. Here's what's in one popular frozen dessert. 🍷

For our comprehensive rating of food additives, see chemicalcuisine.org.



- SAFE:** Appears to be safe.
- CUT BACK:** Not toxic, but large amounts may be unsafe.
- CAUTION:** May pose a risk and needs to be better tested. Try to avoid.
- CERTAIN PEOPLE SHOULD AVOID:** May trigger an allergic reaction, intolerance, or other problem.
- AVOID:** Unsafe in amounts consumed or poorly tested and not worth any risk.

Polydextrose. *Bulking agent.* Made by combining dextrose (corn sugar) with the sugar alcohol sorbitol. Barely adds any calories because it's poorly digested. If a serving contains 15 grams or more, the label has to carry this warning: "Sensitive individuals may experience a laxative effect from excessive consumption of this product."

Propylene glycol. *Moisturizer, stabilizer.* Absorbs extra water and maintains moisture and texture.

Ethyl alcohol. *Preservative, solvent.* The small amounts used in foods are safe. Unclear why it's used in this product.

Maltodextrin. *Texture improver.* Made from starch.

Natural flavor. Most occur in nature and are probably safe. But they're often used when the real thing is left out or, in this case, to pump up the (raspberry) flavor. Companies typically treat the identity of their flavorings like state secrets.

Mono & diglycerides, Polysorbate 80. *Emulsifiers.* May sound unappetizing, but they prevent ingredients from separating. Polysorbate should be better tested.

Artificial Flavor. Could include any of hundreds of chemicals, but labels don't have to identify which ones. Most are used in minuscule amounts and are probably safe, though the FDA doesn't review their safety.

INGREDIENTS: LOW FAT ICE CREAM (MILK, SKIM MILK, SUGAR, POLYDEXTROSE, RASPBERRY FLAVOR BASE (RASPBERRY SEEDLESS PUREE, WATER, SUGAR, RASPBERRY JUICE CONCENTRATE, MALTODEXTRIN, PROPYLENE GLYCOL, ETHYL ALCOHOL, CITRIC ACID, NATURAL FLAVOR, CAROB BEAN GUM, RED 40 AND BLUE 1, GUAR GUM), MALTODEXTRIN, CONTAINS 1% OR LESS OF CELLULOSE GEL, MONO & DIGLYCERIDES, CELLULOSE GUM, CARRAGEENAN, POLYSORBATE 80, VITAMIN A PALMITATE), COATING (COCONUT OIL, SUGAR, CHOCOLATE LIQUOR, COCOA PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, SOYBEAN OIL, SOY LECITHIN, POLYGLYCEROL POLYRICINOLEATE, ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR).

Blue 1. *Artificial coloring.* Might trigger hyperactivity in some children and allergic reactions in some people. It might be safe for others, but it needs to be better tested because it passes through the protective blood-brain barrier.

Cellulose gum, Cellulose gel. *Texture improvers, thickeners, fat replacers.* Produced from the woody parts and cell walls of plants. They're not absorbed or digested, so they can be counted as "dietary fiber" on food labels, even though they don't confer all the benefits of naturally occurring fiber.

Red 40. *Artificial coloring.* The most widely used food dye. It likely triggers hyperactivity in some children, and it causes allergy-like reactions in some people.

Guar gum, Carob bean gum. *Thickeners, fat replacers.* Extracted from guar beans and the seeds of the carob tree. They haven't been fully tested, but are almost certainly safe.

Polyglycerol polyricinoleate, Soy lecithin. *Emulsifiers, viscosity reducers.* Help chocolate melt by reducing friction between the particles of cocoa and sugar.

Carrageenan. *Thickener, stabilizer, fat replacer.* Comes from seaweed. Large amounts have harmed test animals' colons, but the small amounts in food aren't a concern for most people.

We asked Wells Enterprises, which makes these ice cream bars for Weight Watchers, exactly why it uses ethyl alcohol, emulsifiers, and several other of the ingredients. The company declined to tell us.

The Eyes Have It

Can supplements protect your peepers?

BY DAVID SCHARDT

“Every time I go to the pharmacy, I see more vision supplements. It’s so confusing for consumers,” says Julie Mares, professor of ophthalmology and visual sciences at the University of Wisconsin.

“With so many Americans worried about declining vision or already suffering vision disorders, companies see a big opportunity to sell supplements.”

And boy are they taking advantage of it. Products like Brilliant Vision, EyeGuard Plus, Vision Enhancement, and Vision Optimizer are making a blatant grab for shoppers’ eyeballs.

Yet when it comes to the benefits that consumers can expect, packages are vague. That’s no surprise.

A supplement that “promotes healthy eyes” (I-Caps) or promises to “replenish essential nutrients to help protect the health of your eyes” (Ocuville) sounds like it works for *any* vision problem.

Here are the most common ones, and the supplements that might help prevent them:

■ **Cataracts.** By age 70, more than 30 percent of Americans have some clouding in the lens of at least one eye. Replacing the cloudy lens with an artificial one is the most common surgery in the U.S.

What might help: Lutein or a multivitamin with lutein (see p. 10).

■ **Age-related macular degeneration (AMD).** Damage to the center of the retina (the macula) is the leading cause of vision loss in people 50 and older.

Roughly one out of five Americans in their 40s, 50s, and 60s report that they take supplements for their eyes. Are they throwing their money away?

If you’re nearsighted, farsighted, or have glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy, over-the-counter pills aren’t a good bet. But they may help if you’re worried about cataracts or have age-related macular degeneration.

What might help: A supplement with six nutrients may slow down intermediate or advanced—but not early—AMD (see “AREDS Formulas,” p. 11).

■ **Glaucoma.** If fluid pressure builds up in the eye, it can damage the optic

the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston.

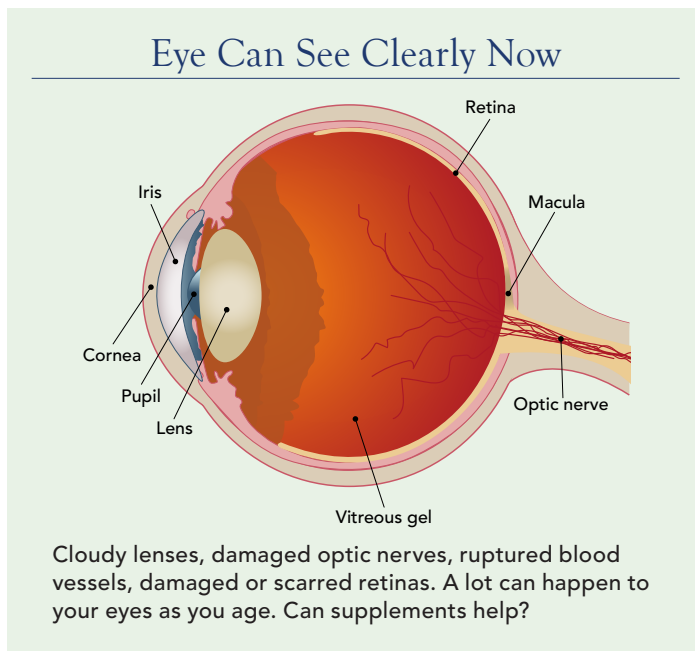
For example, glaucoma progressed just as rapidly in people in Spain who took one of I-Caps’ European formulas every day for two years than in those who took a placebo.¹

■ **Diabetic retinopathy.** Elevated blood sugar can damage the tiny blood vessels in the retina. Eventually, they can hemorrhage and distort your vision. If left untreated, the retina can become scarred.

According to the [National Eye Institute](#), roughly 40 percent of people with diabetes have some retinopathy, but only about half of them know it. In one large study, 8 percent of people with prediabetes also had some retinopathy.²

What might help: Keeping your blood sugar under control can lower your odds of diabetic retinopathy and slow its progression by as much as 70 percent. That’s more than any drug can.

Keeping a lid on blood pressure can also lower your odds of getting retinopathy.³ But there’s little evidence that supplements can help.⁴



nerve. Glaucoma has no symptoms until people start to lose their side vision. Treatment doesn’t reverse the damage.

What might help: “In theory, antioxidants might protect against the disease, but so far, the evidence that they help is limited and inconsistent,” notes researcher Elizabeth Johnson, of

¹ *Acta Ophthalmol.* 93: 546, 2015.

² *Diabet. Med.* 24: 137, 2007.

³ *Cochrane Database Syst. Rev.* 1: CD006127, 2015.

⁴ *Ophthalmic Epidemiol.* 2016. doi:10.3109/09286586.2015.1129426.



Lutein

"Lutein and its twin, zeaxanthin, are the only carotenoids that are found in the lens and in the macula, which is the central part of the retina and therefore most vulnerable to light damage," says Tufts University's Elizabeth Johnson.

"They absorb harmful visible light from the sun, which protects the lens, retina, and other eye tissues."

Some key evidence:

■ **Cataracts.** In studies that track the eating habits of thousands of men and women, people with higher levels of lutein plus zeaxanthin in their diets have a lower risk of cataracts.¹

But in the only good study that tested *supplements*, people with macular degeneration who were given 10 milligrams of lutein and 2 mg of zeaxanthin every day for five years had no lower risk of cataracts.² The exception: supplement takers who got the least lutein plus zeaxanthin from their diets had a 30 percent lower risk of cataracts.

■ **Detecting contrasts.** "Having sufficient lutein and zeaxanthin in the eye has long been suspected of enhancing vision," says the University of Wisconsin's Julie Mares.

"Several studies suggest that lutein supplements improve the ability to detect contrasts between colors or intensities, which can be especially difficult in dim lighting."³

But Mares stops short of recommending that people take lutein. "Getting lutein and zeaxanthin from a plant-rich diet with lots of green leafy vegetables is one of the best ways to preserve your eye health," she notes. "It's probably those carotenoids in combination with other components of the foods that are protective, so you're likely better off getting them from food, not pills."

Since lutein and zeaxanthin are fat-soluble, make sure your meal includes some vegetable oil or a food with fat, adds Johnson.

¹ *Arch. Ophthalmol.* 126: 102, 2008.

² *JAMA Ophthalmol.* 131: 843, 2013.

³ *Invest. Ophthalmol. Vis. Sci.* 55: 8583, 2014.

Taurine

The amino acid taurine is concentrated in the retina, but its function there isn't clear.

Researchers have never given taurine to people to see if it improves or preserves their eyesight. Most people get plenty of taurine from protein foods.

Looking for Lutein

People who eat more lutein plus zeaxanthin (about 6 to 12 milligrams a day) have a lower risk of cataracts.

Vegetables & Fruits (<i>1/2 cup, vegetables cooked, unless noted</i>)	Lutein + Zeaxanthin (mg)
Kale	11.9
Kale (2 cups raw)	11.0
Spinach	10.2
Swiss chard	9.6
Spinach (2 cups raw)	7.3
Collard greens	5.9
Romaine lettuce (2 cups raw)	2.2
Peas, frozen	1.9
Brussels sprouts	1.0
Zucchini	1.0
Broccoli	0.8
Asparagus	0.7
Corn, yellow	0.7
Green beans	0.4
Iceberg lettuce (2 cups raw)	0.4
Nectarine (1)	0.2
Orange (1)	0.2

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database.

Multivitamins

"Taking a daily multivitamin may lower the risk of developing cataracts," says Julie Mares.

In the largest and longest study, the 5,736 U.S. male physicians who took Centrum Silver every day for 11 years had a 9 percent lower risk of cataracts than the 5,761 who took a placebo.¹

"It could be one of the nutrients in the multi, or maybe a combination of the nutrients, that's important," notes Mares.

While the multi contained lutein, it had just 250 micrograms. That's one-quarter of one milligram—what you'd get in about half a teaspoon of cooked spinach.

¹ *Ophthalmology* 121: 525, 2014.



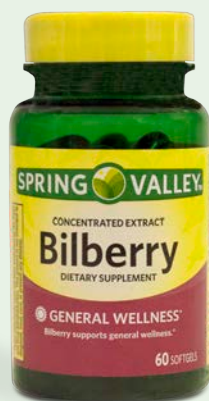
Bilberry

According to legend, British pilots during World War II were better able to hit German targets because their night vision was strengthened from eating bilberry jam. But that may have been a ruse to hide the fact that the pilots had radar to guide them.

Only one small study has tested bilberry on night vision. Fifteen young men who took 160 milligrams of bilberry extract every day for three weeks weren't able to see any better at night than they could after they took a placebo for three weeks.¹

Still, bilberry remains one of the most common ingredients in eye supplements. Doses range from about 30 mg a day to 350 mg, probably because there's no basis for choosing any particular amount.

¹ *Altern. Med. Rev.* 5: 164, 2000.



AREDS Formulas

If you're one of the more than eight million Americans with intermediate or advanced age-related macular degeneration (AMD), the AREDS supplement is for you.

In two U.S. government-funded trials, a combination of lutein and zeaxanthin, vitamin C, vitamin E, zinc, and copper slowed the progression of AMD, though only if the disease was already at an intermediate or advanced stage.^{1,2} The formula didn't prevent AMD from developing in the first place.

Bausch + Lomb owns the patents on the AREDS formula, so competing vision supplements have to tweak the amount of one or more of the AREDS ingredients. Do the alternative formulations work as well? They might, but there's no way to tell, since the AREDS trials didn't test a range of doses to see which was most effective. (See [Jul./Aug. 2015, p. 7.](#))

¹ *Arch. Ophthalmol.* 119: 1417, 2001.

² *JAMA* 309: 2005, 2013.



Vitamins C & E

Sunlight can trigger oxidative stress in the eyes, which can create rogue molecules that damage the lens.

"After decades of exposure to light, the lens is going to feel the effects of light damage," says Tufts University's Elizabeth Johnson. "So antioxidants might be helpful in preventing cataracts."

Unfortunately, large amounts of two of the antioxidants most commonly found in vision supplements, vitamins C and E, have bombed in most studies.

For example, the 18,800 health professionals in the Women's Health Study who took 600 IU of natural vitamin E every other day for 10 years were just as likely to get cataracts or have cataracts extracted as the 18,875 who got a placebo.¹

And the 5,799 physicians who took 500 milligrams of vitamin C or 400 IU of synthetic vitamin E every day for eight years were just as likely to get cataracts as the 5,774 who got a placebo.²

¹ *Ophthalmology* 115: 822, 2008.

² *Arch. Ophthalmol.* 128: 1397, 2010.



How To Protect Your Vision

- **Eat lutein-rich foods.** For good sources, see "Looking for Lutein" (p. 10).
- **Don't smoke.** Smoking increases the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration.
- **Lose excess weight.** People who are overweight have a higher risk of cataracts.
- **Walk, bike, or run.** Among 52,660 Swedish women and men who were monitored for 12 years, those who walked or biked for more than an hour a day had a 12 percent lower risk of cataracts than those who hardly exercised.¹
- **Keep blood sugar and blood pressure under control.** Weight loss, exercise, a healthy diet, and (if necessary) medication to lower blood sugar and blood pressure can prevent diabetic retinopathy.
- **Wear sunglasses.** Get sunglasses that provide 100 percent protection against UV-A and UV-B radiation. Oversized or wraparound glasses are best. Don't worry about the color of the lens.
- **Get your eyes checked.** Every year or two, get an exam with your eyes dilated (so the doctor can see more of your retina, optic nerve, and lens). 🍌

¹ *Ophthalmology* 122: 274, 2015.



Spring Forward

BY KATE SHERWOOD

Asparagus, snap peas, radishes, leeks. It's spring! 🌱

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



Mushroom Leek Fried Rice

- 1 large leek, white and pale green part only
- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ lb. brown mushrooms, chopped
- 1 Tbs. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups cooked brown rice or other whole grain
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped

Quarter the leek lengthwise, rinse it well, then thinly slice it. • In a large non-stick skillet, sauté the leek in 1 Tbs. of the oil over medium-low heat until tender and bright green, 2-3 minutes. Remove from the skillet. • Increase the heat to medium-high and sauté the mushrooms in the remaining 1 Tbs. of oil until golden brown, 3-5 minutes. Season with the soy sauce and pepper to taste. • Return the leek to the skillet, add the rice and scallions, and stir-fry until all ingredients are hot, 1-2 minutes. • Serves 4.

Per serving (1 cup): calories 210 | total fat 8 g
sat fat 1 g | carbs 31 g | fiber 3 g | protein 5 g
sodium 160 mg



Spanish Style Snap Peas

- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large carrot, finely chopped
- 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- ½ bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 Tbs. tomato paste
- ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 lb. snap peas, trimmed

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Sauté the carrot, celery, onion, and bell pepper until lightly browned, 5-7 minutes. • Stir in the tomato paste, pepper flakes, oregano, and salt. Cook, stirring often, until the tomato paste starts to brown, 2-3 minutes.

• Increase the heat to high and stir in ½ cup of water. Add the snap peas and cook until hot but still crisp, 1-2 minutes. • Serves 4.

Per serving (1 cup): calories 170
total fat 11 g | sat fat 1.5 g | carbs 16 g
fiber 5 g | protein 4 g | sodium 150 mg



Asparagus Salad

- 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. mayonnaise
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 6 cups leaf or butter lettuce
- ½ lb. raw asparagus, chopped
- 4 radishes, halved and sliced
- ¼ cup unsalted pistachios, chopped

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and salt. Gently toss with the lettuce, asparagus, and radishes, and top with the pistachios. • Serves 4.

Per serving (2 cups): calories 140 | total fat 12 g
sat fat 1.5 g | carbs 7 g | fiber 3 g | protein 4 g
sodium 170 mg





BY JAYNE HURLEY & BONNIE LIEBMAN

Old spin on cookies: a sugary, not-so-healthy snack you should eat occasionally or in small quantities.

The industry's new spin: a breakfast you can eat every day for energy that lasts all morning...or a good source of whole grains...or a snack that's healthy if it's gluten-free or made from simple ingredients.

Here's our spin.

The information for this article was compiled by Leah Ettman.



Different serving sizes for essentially the same cookie.

WHAT MATTERS

No cookie is a health food. And an occasional unhealthy cookie beats a daily "healthy" cookie ...or two or three.

Here's our guide to finding better cookies. Just don't use it as an excuse to eat more cookies.

■ **Check the serving size.** Are Pepperidge Farm Double Chocolate Milanos (140 calories) better than Dark Chocolate Milanos (180 calories)? Nope. The calories are lower because a serving is two of the slightly heavier Doubles vs. three of the Darks.

Likewise, labels use three Oreos (160 calories), two Double Stuf Oreos (140 calories), and just one Triple Double Oreo (100 calories). Check the serving size first.

■ **Go for whole grains.** You're most likely to find them in breakfast biscuits, non-big-brand oatmeal cookies, and fig bars.

■ **Watch added sugars.** Our chart shows total (added + fruit) sugars because that's what's on food labels. But most sugar in cookies is added, even if they contain fruit. We set no limit on added sugars because some cookies have fruit sugar, because the sugar range was quite narrow...and because they're cookies.

■ **Limit saturated fat.** Most cookies that exceed our 2-gram-per-serving limit get their sat fat from palm oil or butter.

■ **Avoid trans fat.** That means no partially hydrogenated oil.

Cookies for Breakfast?



Not the best breakfast, but better than most cookies.

"4 hours of nutritious steady energy," says belVita Breakfast Biscuits. "Helps keep you going," says Quaker Breakfast Flats. "Long-lasting energy," says Nature Valley Breakfast Biscuits.

Do companies have evidence that their biscuits (cookies) can keep your energy level up longer than other foods? If they do, it hasn't been published.

Odds are, they're banking on the idea that we break down and absorb whole grains like oats (belVita calls them "slowly digestible starches") more slowly than sugar or refined grains. That keeps blood sugar steadier (at least compared to Frosted Flakes or Oreos), but it's no guarantee that the biscuits will keep you energetic.

Energy claims aside, breakfast biscuits by belVita, Nature Valley, Nutri-Grain, Quaker, and Pepperidge Farm are among the best cookies you can buy. Their grains are all or mostly whole, and they're lower in added sugar. You typically get just two to three teaspoons (8 to 13 grams) in roughly a 50-gram packet. Most ordinary cookies have that much sugar in a 30-gram serving.

But most 50-gram packets contain 2 or 3 biscuits. Eat just 1 or 2 (a typical cookie-size serving), and you trim both sugar and calories.

But watch out for impostors. Pepperidge Farm Coffee Shop Banana Nut cookies ("morning reimagined") are, well, ordinary cookies. And Lance Quick Starts have too much saturated fat, plus ingredients like "blueberry bits" that are made with more sugar than fruit.

And don't assume that a whole-grain cookie makes a healthy breakfast. "Enjoy belVita Breakfast Biscuits as part of a balanced breakfast with a serving of low fat dairy and fruit," says the package's small print. Translation: instead of whole-grain toast, you're eating whole-grain cookies with your yogurt and fruit.

Of course, most people won't notice the dairy-and-fruit advice. They'll take the Quaker website's view: "Your childhood dreams have come true, you can have a chocolate chip cookie for breakfast."



Yummy Honorable Mention.

Whole-in-One

Looking for whole-grain cookies other than breakfast biscuits?

■ **Kashi.** “Give in to cookie cravings!” say the boxes. “Wholesome goodies and whole grains baked together for pure cookie bliss.” All four Kashi Soft-Baked varieties—Chocolate Almond Butter, Happy Trail Mix, Oatmeal Dark Chocolate, and Oatmeal

Raisin Flax—are Better Bites. And each 130-or-so-calorie cookie (30 grams) has only 7 or 8 grams of sugar—about a third less than the same size serving of Chips Ahoy! or Oreos.

■ **Back to Nature.** “For over 50 years Back to Nature has passionately created foods with wholesome grains,” say the packages. But only one of the 12+ varieties—the Dark Chocolate & Oats—is a Better Bite. Three others are whole-grain but just missed our saturated-fat limit.

■ **Fig bars.** Two of the four Newtons 100% whole-grain bars contain partially hydrogenated oil, and the other two (Fig and Triple Berry) could, according to the “and/or” list of oils on their labels. So why do all four labels show “0” trans fat? Because labels round down to zero when a serving has less than half a gram of trans.

Whole-grain fig bars from Nature’s Bakery and Barbara’s Multigrain have no partially hydrogenated oil, while Trader Joe’s and most Newman’s Own fig bars *aren’t* whole grain.

■ **Brownie bars.** Nature’s Bakery Double Chocolate Brownies wrap whole wheat flour around a filling made of date paste, fruit purée, sugar, and chocolate.



Take your pick. All four varieties are Better Bites.

Simple

“Real honest baking with only the best ingredients,” say packages of Pepperidge Farm Sweet & Simple Shortbread.

“Baked with...the same simple things you’d reach for in your pantry,” say Keebler Simply Made Butter cookies.

“Simple” claims are all the rage because they sound like “natural” to consumers. But companies can slap them on foods with artificial ingredients.

And simple isn’t healthy. The “best ingredients” in Pepperidge Farm’s Shortbread, for example, include white flour, butter, sugar, fructose (but no high-fructose corn syrup!), and natural flavor. And don’t forget the simple 4 grams of saturated fat in a two-cookie serving.



Simply ignore the hype.

Fake Filling

Do Quaker Oat & Yogurt Strawberry Sandwich Biscuits have strawberries? No. Yogurt? Just a smidgen.

It doesn’t matter if sandwich cookies pretend to be healthy or not. Their filling is sugar and oil. They’re like frosting, not yogurt or cream.



Flour, sugar, and oil, not fruit.

Bootin’ Gluten

Gluten-free cookies are only healthier than whole wheat cookies if you have to avoid gluten.

Glutino and Udi’s, the biggest brands, replace wheat mostly with tapioca starch and rice flour.

Instead, try:

■ **Caveman Cookies.** To appeal to Paleo dieters, they have no grains at all. The Original Raisin & Walnut flavor is honey, almond meal, walnuts, raisins, and spices. They’re a steal if you like chewy cookies made with real fruit.

■ **Lucy’s.** Lucy swaps wheat flour for a blend of oat, chickpea, potato starch, tapioca, sorghum, and fava bean flours. But you can’t taste the difference in her Chocolate Chip cookies or Cinnamon Thins.



Fruit and nuts replace grain. Nice.

Thin is In

“THINaddictives is your wholesome snack that delivers deliciously real taste and 0 guilt,” says Nonni’s THINaddictives Pistachio Almond THINS.

Thins, crisps, and chips are flooding the cookie aisle, with brands both big (Archway, Dare, Oreo) and small (Hannahmax Baking, Mrs. Thinsters’) getting into the act. None had enough whole grain to be a Better Bite or Honorable Mention. But can they help you stay thin?

THINaddictives might, but only because each tiny pack (16 to 21 grams) holds just two or three cookies that total just 70 to 100 calories. (Note: Like some biscotti, THINaddictives will appeal to people who don’t like their cookies overly sweet.)

Thin cookies that *aren’t* individually wrapped save calories only if you eat less than an ounce (28 grams). Ounce for ounce, they’re no lower in calories, sugar, or anything else. 🍓



Just 100 calories. If it were only whole grain.

How they Crumble

Better Bites (✓✓) contain no refined grains. **Honorable Mentions** (✓) have more whole than refined grain. Both have no more than 2 grams of saturated fat and are free of partially hydrogenated oil. We only looked at “healthier” cookies, plus a few old standbys for comparison. Cookies are ranked from least to most sat fat, then sugar, then calories. (Note: The chart shows sugar in teaspoons. To convert to grams, which is how sugar appears on food labels, multiply by 4.2.)

Breakfast Biscuits (No.) (weight) of cookies in 1 pkg.

	Calories	Saturated Fat (g)	Total Sugars (tsp.)
✓ Nutri-Grain (2) (40 g) ^{1,W}	180	1	2
✓✓ Quaker Flats (3) (40 g) ^{1,W}	180	1	2.5
✓ belVita Soft Baked (1) (50 g) ^{1,W}	200	1	2.5
✓✓ Pepperidge Farm Brightside (1) (45 g) ^{1,W}	200	1	2.5
✓ belVita (4) (50 g) ^{1,W}	230	1	3
✓ belVita Bites (46) (50 g) ^{1,W}	230	1	3
✓ Quaker Oat & Yogurt Sandwich (2) (38 g) ^{1,W}	180	2	2.5
✓✓ Nature Valley Breakfast Biscuits (4) (50 g) ^{1,W}	230	2	2.5
Quaker Cookies (1) (48 g) ^{1,W}	180	2	3.5
Nature Valley Biscuits (1) (38 g) ^{1,W}	190	3	2.5
Lance Quick Starts (6) (50 g) ^{1,W}	230	4	3

Regular Cookies (No.) (weight) of cookies closest to 30 grams

✓✓ Nature's Bakery Double Chocolate Brownie Bars (1) (28 g) ^{1,W}	90	0	2
✓ Fiber One Soft-Baked Oatmeal Raisin (1) (31 g) ^W	120	0	2
✓✓ Nature's Bakery Fig Bar (1) (28 g) ^{1,W}	110	0	2.5
✓ Girl Scout Cranberry Citrus Crisps (4) (34 g) ^W	150	0	2.5
✓ Newman's Own Fig Newmans Wheat-Free Dairy-Free (2) (32 g) ^W	110	0	3
Newtons—regular or 100% Whole Grain (2) (29 g) ^{1,W}	110	0	3
✓ Newtons Fat Free Fig (2) (29 g) ^W	100	0	3.5
✓✓ Barbara's Fig Bars Multigrain (2) (38 g) ^W	110	0	3.5
Snackwell's Devil's Food (2) (32 g) ¹	120	0	4
Nonni's THINaddictives Dark Chocolate Cherry Almond (1 pkg.) (16 g)	70	1	1.5
Nonni's Originali Biscotti (1) (20 g)	90	1	1.5
Nonni's THINaddictives (1 pkg.) (21 g) ¹	100	1	1.5
Newman's Own Hermits (1) (22 g) ¹	80	1	2
Snackwell's Creme Sandwich (2) (24 g) ¹	110	1	2
✓✓ Back to Nature Dark Chocolate & Oats (1) (30 g) ^W	120	1	2
✓✓ Snackwell's Mini Chocolate Chip (1 pkg.) (30 g) ^W	120	1	2
✓✓ Kashi Soft-Baked (1) (30 g) ^{1,W}	130	1	2
Trader Joe's Fig Bites (2) (32 g)	120	1	2.5
Newman's Own Fig Newmans Low Fat (2) (32 g)	110	1	3
Girl Scout Rah-Rah Raisins (2) (25 g)	120	2	1.5
✓✓ Nairn's Stem Ginger Oat (3) (30 g) ^W	140	2	1.5
Archway Molasses (1) (27 g)	110	2	2
Newman's Own Newman-O's Original (2) (27 g)	130	2	2.5
✓ Newman's Own Newman-O's Wheat-Free Dairy-Free (2) (27 g) ^W	130	2	2.5
Pepperidge Farm Coffee Shop Banana Nut (1) (30 g)	130	2	2.5
Nilla Wafers (8) (30 g)	140	2	2.5
Archway Oatmeal (1) (34 g)	150	2	2.5
LU Pim's Raspberry (2) (25 g)	100	2	3
Oreo Thins (4) (29 g)	140	2	3
Oreo (3) (34 g)	160	2	3.5
Pepperidge Farm Chessmen (3) (26 g)	120	3	1

Fiber One Crunchy Chocolate Chip (1) (26 g) ^W	110	3	2
Trader Joe's Trail Mix Cookies (4) (28 g)	120	3	2
365 Organic (Whole Foods) Oatmeal (2) (30 g)	130	3	2
Back to Nature—California Lemon, Madagascar Vanilla, or Triple Ginger (5) (30 g) ^{1,W}	150	3	2
Fiber One Soft-Baked—except Oatmeal Raisin (1) (31 g) ¹	120	3	2.5
Chips Ahoy! (3) (33 g)	160	3	2.5
Hannahmax Baking Cookie Chips (5) (28 g) ¹	120	3	3
Newman's Own Oatmeal Chocolate Chip (5) (33 g)	140	3	3
Lotus Biscoff (4) (31 g)	150	3	3
Pepperidge Farm Sweet & Simple Shortbread (2) (26 g)	130	4	1.5
Keebler Simply Made Butter (2) (27 g)	140	4	1.5
LU Petit Écolier Dark Chocolate (2) (25 g)	130	4	2
Pepperidge Farm Sausalito (1) (26 g)	130	4	2
Keebler Simply Made Cookie Thins (5) (28 g) ¹	140	4	2
Pepperidge Farm Milano Double Chocolate (2) (27 g)	140	4	2
Pepperidge Farm Milano Dark Chocolate (3) (34 g)	180	4	2.5
Mrs. Thinstert's Cookie Thins (5) (28 g) ¹	130	4	3
Dare Maple Leaf Creme (2) (34 g)	170	4	3
Archway Cookie Chips (7) (28 g) ¹	140	4	3.5
Tate's Bake Shop Whole Wheat Dark Chocolate (2) (28 g) ^W	140	5	2.5
Dare Cookie Chips (5) (30 g)	150	5	2.5
Girl Scout Thin Mints (4) (32 g)	160	5	2.5
Dare Chocolate Creme (2) (40 g)	200	5	3
Walkers Shortbread Rounds (2) (34 g)	180	6	1.5
Locker Quadratini Hazelnut (8) (29 g)	150	6	2

Gluten-Free Cookies (No.) (weight) of cookies closest to 30 grams

Nature's Bakery (1) (28 g) ¹	100	0	2
✓✓ Aleia's Almond Horns (1) (21 g)	100	0	2.5
✓ Pamela's Ginger or Peanut Butter (1) (23 g) ^W	110	1	1.5
✓ Pamela's Chunky Chocolate Chip (1) (23 g) ^W	120	1	1.5
✓ Pamela's Figgies & Jammies (1) (26 g) ^{1,W}	100	1	2.5
✓ Lucy's (3) (32 g) ^{1,W}	130	1	3
✓✓ Caveman—except Tropical (2) (31 g) ¹	140	1	3
Udi's Soft & Chewy—except Oatmeal Raisin (1) (23 g) ¹	90	2	1.5
✓ Udi's Soft & Chewy Oatmeal Raisin (1) (23 g) ^W	90	2	1.5
✓ Aleia's Oatmeal Raisin (2) (36 g) ^W	140	2	3
Back to Nature (2) (30 g) ¹	140	2	3
Udi's Soft-Baked (1) (26 g) ¹	110	3	1.5
WOW Baking Company (NA) (30 g) ¹	130	3	2
Glutino (2) (29 g) ¹	120	3	2.5
Caveman Tropical (2) (28 g)	140	3	2.5
Andean Dream Quinoa (2) (30 g) ^{1,W}	150	4	1
Girl Scout Toffee-tastic (2) (28 g)	140	4	1.5
Hannahmax Baking Cookie Chips (5) (28 g) ¹	130	4	3
Aleia's—except Oatmeal Raisin (2) (36 g) ¹	160	4	3
Glutino Wafers (4) (30 g) ¹	160	4	3
Go Raw (18) (28 g) ¹	160	5	3

✓✓ Better Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ¹Average. NA Not available. ^W100% whole grain or more whole grain than refined flour.

Daily Saturated Fat Limit: 20 grams. Note: Saturated fat is rounded to the nearest gram, sugar to the nearest half teaspoon, and calories to the nearest 10.

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



RIGHT STUFF

Hummus Heaven



Mark your calendar. May 13 is Hummus Day. Really.

But before you stock up on yummy Sabra (the market leader that's part-owned by PepsiCo), check out the upstart in the dip case.

Eat Well Embrace Life calls itself the "Other Bean" hummus. It ain't kiddin'.

No mashed chickpeas here. Instead, you'll find hummus's traditional tahini (sesame paste) mixed with some other bean or vegetable, plus ingredients

you might not expect in a dip.

The result: intriguing lick-your-lips flavors like **Spicy Red Lentil Chipotle, Wasabi Edamame, Sweet & Spicy Black Bean, Beet, Cucumber, Zesty Sriracha Carrot, and Spicy Yellow Lentil.**

Each serving—two flat tablespoons—has just 50-or-so calories, about 100 milligrams of sodium, and zero saturated fat. Just remember to multiply if you keep scooping after tablespoon number two. (A single-serve Sabra container has about 4 tablespoons.)

And if you only think of hummus as a dip, check out the [recipes](#) on Eat Well Embrace Life's website. How does Hummus Avocado Salad Dressing sound? Or Hummus Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes? Or Salmon with Crispy Hummus Crust? Hummus-crusted salmon? Who knew?

eatwellembrelife.com—(855) 694-8668



FOOD PORN

Stack 'Em Up

"Crisp, golden mozzarella between two fresh burgers, with a pepperoni spiced marinara, spicy vegetables and Asiago & Parmesan cheeses."



That's **TGI Fridays' Sicilian Stacked Burger.**

What's a burger without some deep-fried mozzarella sticks sandwiched between the meat and cheese and white flour?

You gotta have something to make it stand out.

So what if the stack racks up 1,650 calories, 36 grams of saturated fat, and 3,720 milligrams of sodium? True, that's equal to about three Big Macs at McDonald's. Or three 10 oz. Rib-Eye Steaks at Fridays. But life is short.

And that's if you skip the seasoned (read: salty) fries that come with the Stacked Burger. With fries, you're up to a full day's calories (1,970), a 48-hour supply of sat fat (39 grams), and enough sodium to last you three days (4,730 mg).

Instead, try the Rotisserie Chicken Salad Sandwich on multi-grain bread (810 calories) from the Handholds menu, with a side salad or broccoli instead of fries.

The sandwich is salty (sigh), but at least it won't stack the deck against you.



DISH of the month



Greek Green Beans

Whisk together 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar, ½ tsp. oregano, and ½ tsp. salt. Toss 1 lb. cooked, cold, chopped green beans with ¼ cup crumbled feta, 1 cup chopped cherry tomatoes, ¼ cup minced red onion, and the dressing.

quick tip

In rare cases, a *Campylobacter* infection can lead to reactive arthritis—long-lasting pain in the ankles, knees, or other joints. Since healthy chickens harbor *Campylobacter* in their intestines, treat all chicken as though it were contaminated.