

# Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®  
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

## Headline Headaches

Are you getting the full story?

**SUGAR SUBSTITUTES**  
Which are safe?

Picking the best  
**CHEESES**

Added sugars  
**revealed**



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MEMO FROM MFJ

# Turning Over the Reins



Back in 1971 and just a year out of grad school, I met two other scientists—Jim Sullivan and Al Fritsch—who were also working with Ralph Nader. After a few months, we came up with a crazy idea:

Why not start a group run by scientists instead of lawyers? So, with no money, no experience in running an organization, and no connections, we created the Center for Science in the Public Interest.

Somehow, with a grant here and a publication there, we found the resources to build up a staff. When Jim and Al left at the end of 1977, I became executive director.

In 1974, we started a newsletter to connect progressive nutritionists. When we realized that the public also had a thirst for credible information, we started selling subscriptions.

That publication? It's in your hands. Over the years, *Nutrition Action's* subscribers (about 600,000 now) and donors have largely fueled CSPI's activities.

I'm so proud of what our little band of scientists, lawyers, and advocates has accomplished:

- **New laws.** We led efforts for laws mandating Nutrition Facts labels, calories on menus, healthier school foods, new food-safety protections, and better labeling of allergens.
- **Safer foods.** We got rid of partially hydrogenated oil (the source of artificial trans fat), sulfites (a sometimes-lethal allergen) that were used to treat fresh vegetables, Violet 1 dye, and Olestra (we laughed the diarrhea-inducing fake fat out of the food supply).
- **Healthier foods.** Our campaigns led to declines in soda pop and sugar consumption and curbed junk food ads aimed at children.

■ **Fewer deceptive labels and ads.** We used publicity, complaints to government agencies, and lawsuits to end deceptive claims by Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, Kraft, Campbell, Procter & Gamble, Sara Lee, and many others.

After 46 years—and I can't tell you how much fun it has been!—I've decided that it's time to catch up on reading, travel more, and think about new approaches to improving the public's health. So, in September, I'll be turning CSPI's reins over to Dr. Peter Lurie.

Peter is a family physician and former Associate Commissioner for Public Health Strategy and Analysis at the Food and Drug Administration. He led the FDA's initiatives on antibiotic resistance and transparency, and worked on international tobacco control and caffeinated beverages, among other things.

At Public Citizen's Health Research Group, where he worked previously, Peter focused on drug safety. He is

co-author of the popular consumer guide to medications, *Worst Pills, Best Pills*.

I have total confidence that Peter will build on CSPI's record of accomplishment and continue to win new public protections, provide consumers with accurate information, serve as a check on industry's power, and nurture a new generation of public-interest scientists.

I will continue as CSPI's senior science advisor, serve on CSPI's board of directors, and help CSPI however else I can.

Thank you for your support. It has sustained the organization—and me personally.

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



Scratching my head over a cereal label in 1972.

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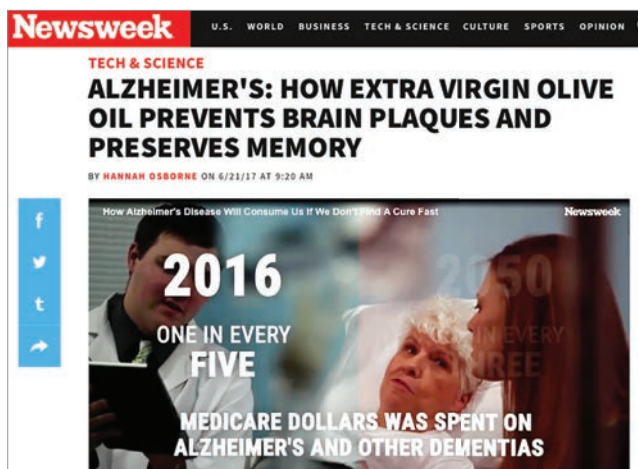
# Headline Headaches

Are you getting the full story?

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN



**F**ood is a hot topic. In the rush to post headlines on the latest studies, some articles miss or confuse key facts. Sometimes, it's the studies' authors who get it wrong. Here's a look behind the headlines.



“**E**xtra virgin olive oil is the key ingredient of the Mediterranean diet that protects the brain from Alzheimer’s disease and cognitive decline, scientists have discovered,” [announced Newsweek](#) in June.

Case closed? Hardly...unless you happen to be a mouse.

Don’t get us wrong. The study was exciting. The scientists used mice that are genetically engineered to get not just memory loss but the plaques and tau tangles that occur in the brains of people with Alzheimer’s.<sup>1</sup>

And mice that were given extra-virgin olive oil—the researchers didn’t say how much—for six months did better on mazes that test memory and learning than those that got no olive oil.

What’s more, the mice fed olive oil had healthier synapses (links between nerve cells), fewer plaques, and less abnormal tau, probably because their nerve cells were better at getting rid of debris.

Exciting, yes. But it’s a long way from a mouse study to preventing Alzheimer’s in humans.

**Bottom Line:** Extra-virgin olive oil is good for your heart. Will it also preserve your memory? It’s far too early to say.

<sup>1</sup> [Ann. Clin. Transl. Neurol. 2017. doi:10.1002/acn3.431.](#)

“**C**hildren who drink alternatives to dairy milk, including soy, almond or rice milks, appear to be slightly shorter than their peers who drink cow’s milk, according to new research,” [reported CBSNews.com](#) in June.

What is “slightly”? “For each cup of non-cow’s milk children drank per day, they were 0.4 centimeters shorter than average,” noted CBS.<sup>1</sup> That’s about a sixth of an inch.

To its credit, CBS explained that the study doesn’t prove that non-dairy milk stunts growth, and that the authors didn’t ask parents what else

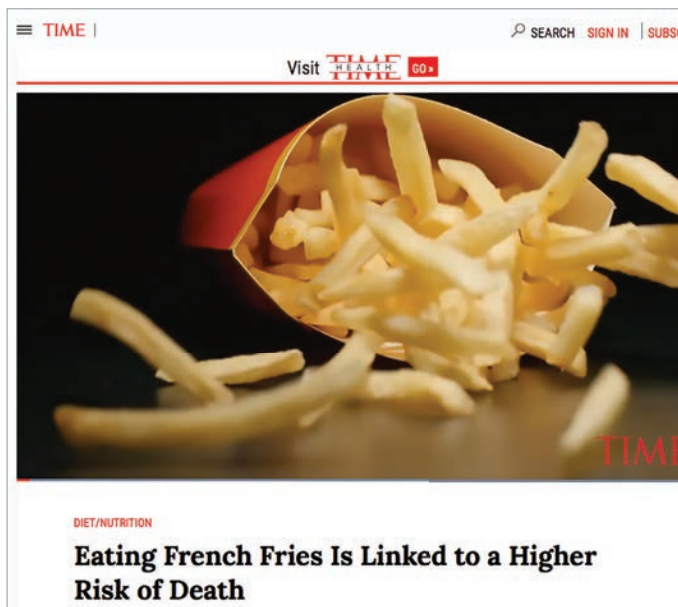


their kids ate—which could have explained the difference.

But CBS repeated the authors’ claim that “non-cow’s milk contains less protein and fat than cow’s milk,” without explaining that soy milk has about as much protein as cow’s milk, while almond and rice have much less. (The study didn’t ask which one the kids drank.)

**Bottom Line:** Before you buy non-dairy milk, compare its protein, sugar, and calcium to cow’s milk.

<sup>1</sup> [Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2017. doi:10.3945/ajcn.117.156877.](#)



“People have long known French fries aren’t great for your health—but now a study has linked eating fried potatoes at least twice a week with an increased risk of death,” [reported TIME](#) in June.

The risk of dying was twice as high for people who ate fried potatoes at least twice a week than for those who ate them no more than once a month, said the study, which tracked 4,440

people aged 45 to 79 for eight years.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, “eating unfried potatoes, such as potato salad and boiled, baked and mashed potatoes, was not linked to an increased risk of death,” said *TIME*.

“Unfried white potatoes are a relatively healthy food because they contain a good amount of fiber, vitamins and micronutrients, the study authors write,” noted *TIME*, “which ‘could have counterbalanced the detrimental effects of their high glycemic index.’”

Yes, the authors wrote that, but they should have noted that frying *lowers* a food’s glycemic index—that is, fried potatoes cause less of a spike in blood sugar than unfried potatoes.

“Fried potatoes, however, typically have lots of fat and added salt,” explained *TIME*, paraphrasing the authors.

News flash: mashed potatoes and potato salad also typically have plenty of salt. And the unsaturated fat used for frying isn’t harmful, except that it boosts calories.

At least *TIME* didn’t repeat the authors’ claim that fries are high in trans fat. The trans that was in fries during the early part of the study (2004 to around 2008) could have raised the death rate, but most restaurant chains no longer fry in trans fat.

**Bottom Line:** Do french fries raise your risk of dying? It’s unclear. Longer, larger, better studies do find a higher risk of type 2 diabetes in people who eat more potatoes, fried or unfried. But this study only made headlines because fries+death=clickbait.

<sup>1</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 2017. doi:10.3945/ajcn.117.154872.

“The American Heart Association recently released a report advising against the use of coconut oil,” [reported USA Today](#) in June.

True enough, though the report looked at the impact of *all* fats on heart disease.<sup>1</sup> It’s just that the coconut oil advice got most of the press. Still, *USA Today* did a good job of explaining how coconut oil became a go-to food for dieters.

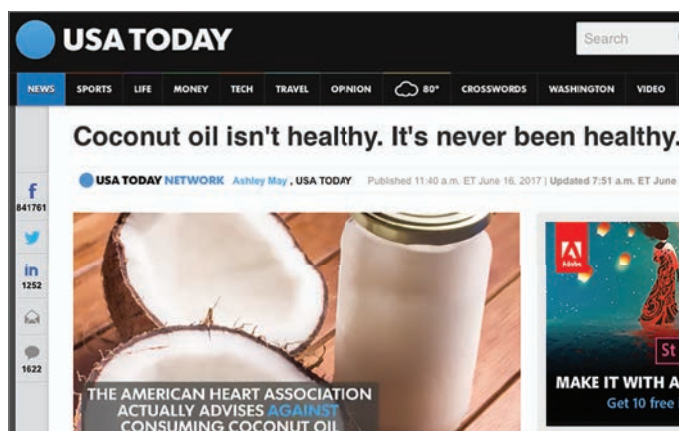
“The reason coconut oil is so popular for weight loss is partly due to my research on medium chain triglycerides,” Marie-Pierre St-Onge, associate professor of nutritional medicine at Columbia University Medical Center, told *TIME* in April,” noted *USA Today*.

St-Onge found that medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are found in coconut oil, may boost metabolism more than other fats.

“The problem is St-Onge’s research used a ‘designer oil’ packed with 100% MCTs,” said *USA Today*. “Traditional coconut oil only contains about 13 to 15%.”

Too bad *USA Today* then implied that saturated fat—which comprises 85 percent of the fat in coconut oil—might not be harmful. “Before you trash your coconut oil, know that saturated fat is a loaded term,” noted the article.

“While the AHA warns against it, people who cut saturated fat out of their diet might not necessarily lower their heart disease risk....That’s because some people fill the void with sugar, white flour and empty calories.”



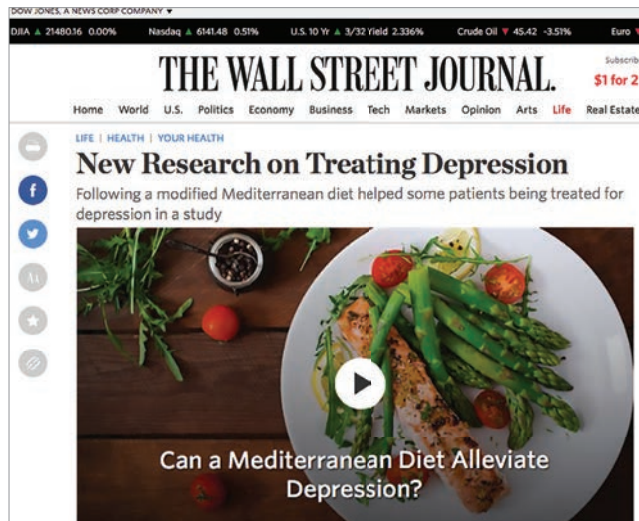
Yes, that’s why the heart association said to replace saturated fats with *unsaturated* fats, not bad carbs.

“You wouldn’t tell people to replace their sat fat with sugary soft drinks or doughnuts,” said the report’s lead author, Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

**Bottom Line:** Replace saturated-fat-rich foods like red meat, cheese, and butter with polyunsaturated-fat-rich foods like seafood, nuts, soybean oil, and mayo.

<sup>1</sup> *Circulation* 2017. doi:10.1161/CIR.0000000000000510.





“Following a modified Mediterranean diet helped some patients being treated for depression in a study,” reported the [Wall Street Journal](#) in January. The article noted that the study was “the first randomized controlled one.”

“A third of patients assigned to a group that followed a modified Mediterranean diet met the criteria for remission in 12 weeks, compared with just 8 percent in a control group,”

said the *Journal*.

True, but the study was small, and it enrolled people whose diets were heavy on sweets and chips, not fruits and vegetables.<sup>1</sup> What’s more, it didn’t compare the prescribed diet to any other diet. (The control group got “social support”—visits discussing sports, news, music, or other topics of interest.)

And for many people, the study’s “Mediterranean diet” would have meant a major overhaul. As the *Journal* noted, it “included a lot of fruits, vegetables, beans, fish, whole grains, lean red meat, olive oil and nuts, and cut back on sweets, processed foods, soft drinks and other unhealthy items.” Which of those changes mattered is unclear.

Too bad the article ended by quoting a psychiatrist who “gives his patients brain-food prescriptions that include increasing the consumption of certain categories of food—such as leafy greens and bivalves—as well as certain nutrients, such as vitamin B12, long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, and magnesium.”

The *Journal* neglected to say whether there are randomized controlled studies to back all of that advice.

**Bottom Line:** A heart-healthy “Mediterranean diet” is a good bet whether you’re depressed or not.

<sup>1</sup> [BMC Med. 15: 23, 2017.](#)

“Artisanal bread, like these French baguettes, is not necessarily healthier than processed white bread, a new study says,” noted the photo caption in [Newsweek](#) in June.

Huh?

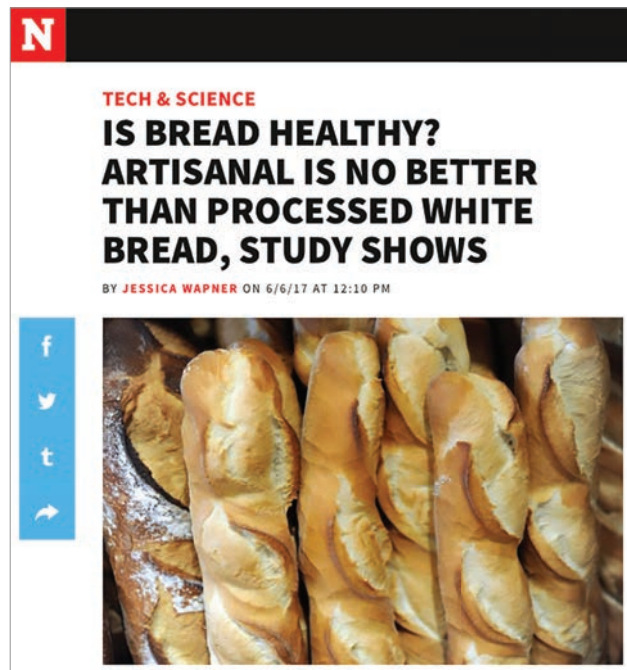
The study pitted a Wonder-like white bread against an artisanal (traditionally made) whole wheat sourdough, not a white baguette like those in the photo.

The results: 20 people who ate the white bread for a week had no higher blood sugar levels than after they ate the whole wheat sourdough for a week.<sup>1</sup>

That’s not a huge surprise. In earlier studies, both whole wheat and white bread caused a similar rise in blood sugar (though white sourdough might cause a slightly smaller jump).

The surprise: “The researchers found that which bread was best for each person could be predicted based on the bacteria present in their gut,” explained *Newsweek*.

As one study author explained, “these findings could lead to a more rational



approach for telling people which foods are a better fit for them, based on their microbiomes.”

Hmm. That would have been a good time to note, as did a [CNN report](#) on the same study, that two of the authors “are paid consultants for a company that offers personalized nutrition recommen-

dations based on DNA sequencing of your microbiome.”

CNN also pointed out that blood sugar isn’t the whole ballgame.

“The health benefits of whole grains may be much longer-term than a one-week study can show, especially in relation to gut health and prevention of conditions like bowel cancer,” Elizabeth Lund, a former researcher at the Institute of Food Research in the UK, told CNN.

“This study does not imply that people should give up eating whole-grain foods based on these results.”

**Bottom Line:** Why eat grains that are stripped of their fiber, vitamins, and minerals? Whole grains may also lower your risk of heart disease. What’s more, how much any food raises your blood sugar depends on how it’s cooked, the rest of the meal, your gut microbes, and more.

<sup>1</sup> [Cell Metab. 25: 1243, 2017.](#)



"You may want to be careful the next time you reach for a 'diet' food—unless you're looking to go up a pant size," declared *U.S. News & World Report* in April.

"The study tried to assess the impact of popular diet foods that market no or low-fat content, but add more sugar," said *U.S. News*.

The result: "Rats eating foods with high sugar content and minimal fat content actually added to their body fat as opposed to those eating 'a balanced rodent diet,' according to a news release."

Perhaps if someone at *U.S. News* had read the study, they might have noticed that the rats that gained the *most* body fat were fed a diet high in sugar *and* fat.<sup>1</sup>

Maybe that doesn't fit with the popular notion that low-fat "diet" foods spur more overeating than "satiating" high-fat foods. Not in these rats.

**Bottom Line:** Limit sugary foods whether they're high or low in fat. And don't assume that low-fat foods have more sugar than their fatty counterparts. A cup of a super-premium ice cream like Häagen-Dazs has about as much sugar as—and roughly twice the calories (500 to 600) of—a cup of Breyers or Edy's.

<sup>1</sup> *Physiol. Behav.* 173: 305, 2017.

Everything we know about salt may be wrong?

"New studies of Russian cosmonauts, held in isolation to simulate space travel, show that eating more salt made them less thirsty but somehow hungrier," reported the *New York Times* in May.

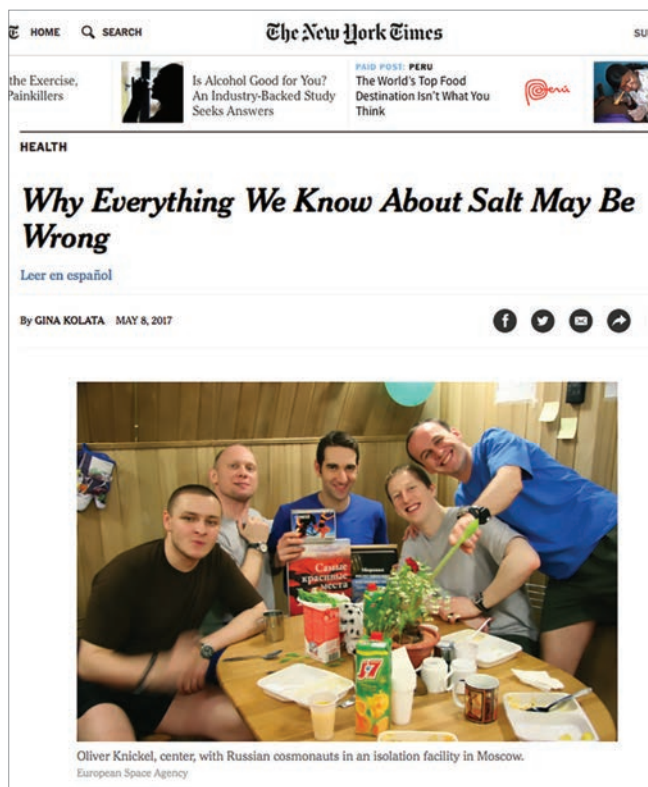
"Subsequent experiments found that mice burned more calories when they got more salt, eating 25 percent more just to maintain their weight."

Those findings were indeed stunning. Earlier experiments had led scientists to conclude that salt loading triggers thirst, which leads people to drink more water, thus correcting the imbalance of salt and water in their bodies.

But that didn't happen, possibly because the high-salt diet contained 4,650 milligrams of sodium a day, only about twice the recommended level (2,300 mg).

Instead of drinking more water, the 10 cosmonauts drank—and excreted—less water on the high-salt diet.<sup>1</sup> Why?

A mouse study suggested that the



humans fixed their excess-salt imbalance, in part, by breaking down muscle, which releases water.<sup>1</sup>

And that process burns calories, "which

is why the mice ate 25 percent more food on a high-salt diet," explained the *Times*.

That could explain why the cosmonauts were hungrier on the high-salt diet.

And that's why "Dr. Titze said he would not advise eating a lot of salt to lose weight," noted the *Times*, referring to study co-author Jens Titze, of Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

Fascinating. But what do the findings mean for older, less-fit people, and for salt's role in raising blood pressure (and, therefore, the risk of stroke and heart disease)? The studies didn't report changes in blood pressure in the cosmonauts.

So much for "everything we know about salt" being wrong.

**Bottom Line:** Follow the advice from the American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

and other major health authorities to cut back on salt. 🍷

<sup>1</sup> *J. Clin. Invest.* 127: 1625, 1932, 1944, 2017.



# LOW-CAL SWEETENERS

BY CAITLIN DOW

Do low-calorie sweeteners like aspartame and sucralose cause cancer? Make you gain weight? Give you diabetes? Here's what the best evidence shows.



## 1 Cancer

"Of all the low-calorie sweeteners, aspartame has been tested the most rigorously and thoroughly," says James Huff, former associate director for chemical carcinogenesis at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. "There's a lot of strong evidence against it."

In three of the best studies, male and female rats and male (but not female) mice that were fed aspartame along with their food had higher rates of several cancers—including lymphoma and leukemia—than rodents fed no aspartame.<sup>1-3</sup>

Those studies were larger and longer—they lasted a lifetime—than the earlier industry studies that the FDA relied on to approve aspartame.

"Even at doses close to what humans might consume, aspartame was carcinogenic," notes Huff.

How does cancer in rodents translate into cancer in humans? "There's a darn good correlation," says Huff.

However, in two studies that tracked roughly 575,000 people for five to ten years, researchers found no link between how much aspartame they consumed and their risk of cancer.<sup>4,5</sup>

But the researchers didn't wait long enough, since most cancers take decades to develop. "The longer the study, the better," says Huff.

And, in fact, there is a longer study. It started around the time that aspartame entered the food supply, and it followed people for roughly 20 years.<sup>6</sup>

Men (but not women) who drank at least one diet soda a day had a slightly higher risk of two cancers—multiple myeloma and non-Hodgkin lymphoma—than men who drank no diet soda. (We get

most of our aspartame from diet soda.)

Why only men? Possibly because they have more of an enzyme that converts methanol (one of the compounds into which aspartame breaks down) into formaldehyde, a human carcinogen.

Three other low-calorie sweeteners may also raise cancer risk.



You're less likely to gain weight on diet drinks than on sugary drinks.

In a recent study, male mice that were fed sucralose starting in the womb and throughout their lives had a higher risk of leukemia than mice that weren't fed sucralose. Female mice had no higher risk.<sup>7</sup> But that doesn't mean that sucralose is safe for women. And there are no studies in humans.

And in older studies, acesulfame potassium and saccharin also increased cancer risk in animals.

**Bottom Line:** Aspartame, sucralose, acesulfame potassium, and saccharin cause cancer in animals. The safest low-calorie sweeteners are erythritol and stevia leaf extract. Monk fruit extract may also be safe, though it hasn't been well tested.

<sup>1</sup> *Environ. Health Perspect.* 114: 379, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Environ. Health Perspect.* 115: 1293, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Am. J. Ind. Med.* 53: 1197, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> *J. Nutr.* 144: 2041, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> *Cancer Epidemiol. Biomarkers Prev.* 15: 1654, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 96: 1419, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> *Int. J. Occup. Environ. Health* 22: 7, 2016.

## 2 Weight

"Diet drinks are associated with weight gain, new research suggests," read the [headline](#) in the *Washington Post* this July.

That wasn't the first time people who drink diet sodas were told that they may be setting themselves up to fail.

"Some experts believe that artificial sweeteners trigger sweetness receptors in the brain, which cause the body to prepare itself for an influx of calories," said an [article](#) on time.com in July 2016.

"Even though those calories don't arrive, the body still craves them, and that may cause people to eat more calories overall, putting them at a risk for weight gain."

Diet soda can make you *gain* weight? Not so fast.

"Some observational studies show that people who drink diet beverages are at a greater risk of being obese or gaining weight," says Vasanti Malik, a research scientist at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

But those kinds of studies—which ask

people about their diet and then track their health for years or decades—can't prove that diet sodas *cause* weight gain.

"People who are overweight or whose weight is creeping up may opt for diet drinks to control their weight," says Malik.

In other words, people may consume diet drinks *because* they're gaining weight.

What's more, notes Malik, "In our work, diet drinks are not associated with weight gain."<sup>1</sup>

That could be because her study, which followed 125,000 adults for about 20 years, took more factors into account—like diet, sleep, exercise, and time watching TV—than others.

"Most people gain weight over time," explains Malik. "Our study showed that if you drink sugar-sweetened beverages, you gain more weight. But our results also suggest that if you switch from sugar-sweetened drinks to diet drinks, water, lowfat milk, coffee, or tea, you gain less weight over time."

And that's backed by strong evidence from a large double-blind, randomized clinical trial.

When Dutch researchers randomly assigned 641 children to drink a cup a day of a drink sweetened with either sugar or a low-calorie sweetener (sucralose and acesulfame potassium) for 1½ years, the kids who got the sugar-sweetened drink gained more weight and body fat.<sup>2</sup>

So diet drinks cause less weight gain than sugary drinks. But are dieters worse off with diet drinks than water?

In one study, researchers enrolled 318 overweight or obese adults who reported getting at least 280 calories a day from beverages.<sup>3</sup>

"That could include soda, sports drinks, alcohol—anything but plain milk," says co-author Deborah Tate, a professor of health behavior and nutrition at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina.

The *diet-drink group* was told to replace

## S-w-e-e-t

	Brand Names	Comments
<b>SAFE</b>		
Advantame		Not used yet
Erythritol	Equal Naturals, Lakanto, Splenda Naturals, Swerve, Truvia, Wholesome Zero	Sometimes mixed with stevia leaf or monk fruit extract
Neotame	Newtame	Rarely used
Stevia leaf extract	Equal Naturals, Pure Via, Splenda Naturals, Stevia in the Raw, SweetLeaf, Truvia	Some people get a slightly bitter after-taste
<b>SAFE IN MODERATION</b>		
Hydrogenated starch hydrolysate, Isomalt, Lactitol, Maltitol, Mannitol, Sorbitol, Xylitol		Large amounts cause GI distress
<b>CAUTION</b>		
Monk fruit extract	Lakanto, Monk Fruit in the Raw	Barely tested
<b>AVOID</b>		
Acesulfame potassium	Equal Original, Equal Spoonful	Causes cancer in animals
Aspartame	AminoSweet, Equal Original, Equal Spoonful, NutraSweet	Causes cancer in animals. May cause headaches
Saccharin	Necta Sweet, Sugar Twin, Sweet'N Low	Causes cancer in animals
Sucralose	Splenda	Causes cancer in animals

Notes: Equal Original and Equal Spoonful contain aspartame and acesulfame potassium. Equal Naturals, Splenda Naturals, and Truvia contain erythritol and stevia leaf extract. Lakanto contains erythritol and monk fruit extract.

at least two servings a day of caloric beverages with diet drinks, the *water group* was told to replace at least two servings with water, and the *control group* got general advice about healthy eating.

After six months, "all three groups had lost 2 percent of their weight—about four or five pounds," says Tate. However, people in the diet-drink group were twice as likely to lose at least 5 percent of their weight as those in the control group. The water group did almost as well.

"The diet-drink group may have had

an easier time replacing caloric beverages than the water group," says Tate.

So, over the short term, diet drinks may help some people kick the sugary-drink habit more than water does.

But Tate is cautious. "Over time, people could start compensating by consuming more calories," she says.

Malik also hesitates to endorse diet drinks over water.

"For people who drink soda often, diet drinks are probably better," she says. "But the goal isn't to switch from regular soda to diet soda. It's to switch to healthier drinks like water, seltzer, or unsweetened coffee or tea."

And what about the claim that low-calorie sweeteners cause people to crave calories?

Some studies find that the brain responds differently when people taste artificial sweeteners than when they taste sugar.<sup>4,5</sup> But there's little evidence that those differences actually change what people eat.

*Strike one:* If low-calorie sweeteners caused people to crave sugar, why would the Dutch trial—and smaller, shorter studies in adults—find that people gain less weight on diet drinks than on sugary beverages?

*Strike two:* Short-term studies don't find much evidence for cravings. For example, 31 adults ate no more calories at lunch and dinner on days when their pre-meal snack was crackers and cream cheese sweetened with stevia or aspartame than on days

when the cream cheese was sweetened with sugar.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, on the aspartame and stevia days, they ended up eating about 300 fewer calories than on the sugar day.

*Strike three:* In Tate's study, people who drank diet beverages ate fewer desserts than people who drank water.<sup>7</sup>

"We don't know why," says Tate. "It could be that diet drinks provide sweetness, caffeine, carbonation, and overall enjoyment without any calories. So may-



be they satisfy some of those sweet cravings. Either way, our study didn't show that replacing caloric drinks with diet drinks causes people to seek out *more* sweet foods."

**Bottom Line:** If you want to lose—or not gain—weight, switch from sugary drinks to diet drinks or water.

<sup>1</sup> *Int. J. Obes.* 37: 1378, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> *N. Eng. J. Med.* 367: 1397, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 95: 555, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 82: 1011, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> *NeuroImage* 39: 1559, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> *Appetite* 55: 37, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 97: 604, 2013.

## 3 Diabetes

"Diet sodas may alter our gut microbes in a way that increases the risk of metabolic diseases such as type 2 diabetes—at least in some of us," [reported](#) NPR in 2014.

The source: an Israeli study in which mice fed low-calorie sweeteners (saccharin, sucralose, or aspartame) for 11 weeks had worse glucose tolerance—that is, their blood sugar spiked higher after they drank a sugar-laden liquid—than mice fed ordinary sugars or water.<sup>1</sup>

"Those findings really caught people's attention," says George Kyriazis, an assistant professor at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in Orlando, Florida.

What's more, low-calorie sweeteners didn't affect glucose tolerance if the mice were also given antibiotics, suggesting that the sweeteners impair glucose tolerance by disturbing the balance of gut bacteria.

However, all the sweeteners weren't the same. Aspartame appeared to have little or no impact on glucose tolerance, while saccharin and sucralose affected only some "responders."

"The results were mind-boggling because artificial sweeteners have different chemical structures and probably won't be processed in the same way by gut bacteria," says Kyriazis.

For the rest of the study, the researchers used only saccharin because it caused the highest spike in blood sugar in the mice. They gave seven people who didn't drink much diet soda about

10 packets' worth of saccharin each day.

"Four of them developed glucose intolerance after a week," notes Kyriazis.

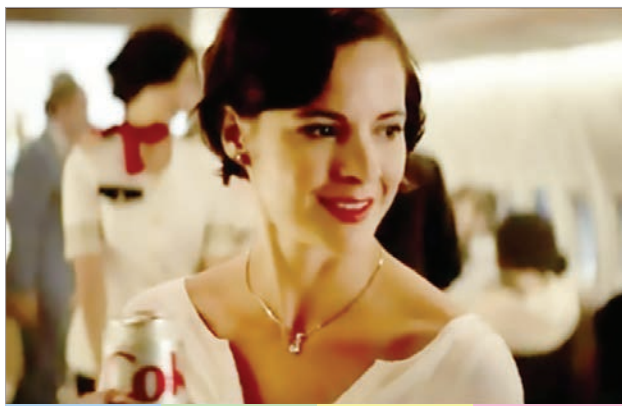
And when their stool samples were transferred to mice that had been raised in a sterile environment—so they had no gut bacteria—the mice also became glucose intolerant.

But since 2014, no researchers have done a similar study. (Kyriazis has a pilot study under way.)

"It's too early to conclude that artificial sweeteners can be harmful or beneficial or neutral for glucose tolerance,"

says Kyriazis.

What about long-term studies that ask



It's too early to know if diet drinks raise the risk of diabetes or dementia.

people what they drink and look at who gets type 2 diabetes? Some report a higher risk in diet-beverage drinkers, but the best studies do not.<sup>2,3</sup>

"At first, we also found an increased risk for diabetes with diet-beverage intake," says Harvard's Vasanti Malik, who co-authored one of those studies, which followed 40,000 men for 20 years.<sup>3</sup>

"But we were able to control for dieting behavior, recent weight gain or loss, family history of diabetes, and other factors that influence risk that other groups hadn't taken into account."

Once they did, "the link between diet-soda intake and diabetes risk vanished."

**Bottom Line:** If you're worried that diet soda may increase your risk of diabetes, ask your doctor to test your hemoglobin A1c (a long-term measure of blood sugar).

<sup>1</sup> *Nature* 514: 181, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> *Diabetes Care* 32: 688, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 93: 1321, 2011.

## 4 Dementia & Stroke

"Gulping down an artificially sweetened beverage not only may be associated with health risks for your body, but also possibly your brain," [warned](#) [cnn.com](#) in April.

Researchers studied participants in the Framingham Heart Study. After 10 years, those who said they drank at least one diet drink a day were nearly three times more likely to have an ischemic stroke or suffer from dementia than those who drank none.<sup>1</sup>

But when the researchers took blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, and other factors into account, the link between diet soda and dementia disappeared.

What about strokes?

"It is entirely possible that the intake of diet drinks starts after the cardiovascular risk is increased and, therefore, is a marker of a high-risk profile rather than being a causal risk factor for stroke or dementia," wrote Ralph Sacco, chair of the neurology department at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, and co-authors in an editorial accompanying the study.<sup>2</sup>

Others agree.

"We need to be cautious in the interpretation of these results," says Rachel Johnson, professor of nutrition at the University of Vermont.

"It doesn't prove cause and effect. When you see these kinds of associations, you want to always ask what is the biological plausibility, what is the mechanism that might be causing this?"

"We have a robust body of literature on the adverse effects of sugary drinks. Absolutely, the message is not to switch to sugary drinks."

**Bottom Line:** The evidence linking diet soda to stroke and dementia is weak. If you're concerned, switch to water, seltzer, coffee, or tea. 🍷

<sup>1</sup> *Stroke* 48: 1139, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> *Stroke* 48: 1129, 2017.

For the latest on low-calorie sweeteners and some 150 other food additives, see [chemicalcuisine.org](#).

# NEW Nutrition Facts Labels

BY LINDSAY MOYER & BONNIE LIEBMAN

In May 2016, when the Food and Drug Administration finished its overhaul of Nutrition Facts labels, it gave large companies a July 2018 deadline to put them on packages (go, FDA!).

But in June, the Trump administration said that it would postpone the deadline (sigh). Nevertheless, some companies have forged ahead (applause!).

Here's a sampling of foods from those pioneers (thank you!). Most caught our attention because they (finally) reveal how much added sugar to expect in cereals, ice creams, yogurts, and more. And they show how much of a day's worth of added sugar a serving of the food contains, using the FDA's Daily Value (50 grams). You're better off with even less. 🍓



Trader Joe's Avocado Citrus Whole Milk Greek Yogurt has 12 grams of added sugar—a quarter of a day's worth—in a 5 oz. cup. Most flavored greek yogurts, like this one, probably have 3 to 5 grams of naturally occurring milk sugar.



Quaker Orchard Peach Pecan Perfection Overnight Oats has 13 grams (3 teaspoons) of added sugar—26 percent of a day's worth. Another 4 grams of sugar is naturally occurring in the peaches.



In Whole Foods 365 Organic Blackberry Conserve, 9 of the 10 grams of sugar in every tablespoon are added—that's 18 percent of a day's worth—even though blackberry purée is the first ingredient.

**NEW LABEL / WHAT'S DIFFERENT**

**Servings:**  
larger,  
bolder type

**New:**  
added sugars

**Change**  
in nutrients  
required

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	<b>10%</b>
Calcium 260mg	<b>20%</b>
Iron 8mg	<b>45%</b>
Potassium 235mg	<b>6%</b>

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Serving sizes updated

Calories: larger type

Updated daily values

Actual amounts declared

New footnote



**Izze Sparkling Grapefruit** has no added sugar. But each 12 oz. bottle has 120 calories and 29 grams of sugar from apple, white grape, orange, and grapefruit juice. Juice sugars don't count as added, but liquid calories are more likely to lead to weight gain than whole fruit.



**Hood Cape Cod Fudge Shop** ice cream has 16 grams of added sugar—a third of a day's worth—in a 2/3-cup serving. That's probably typical. We estimate that about three-quarters of the sugar in most ice creams is added.



An 11 oz. can of **Starbucks Mocha Doubleshot Energy** gets 11 grams of sugar from milk and 8 grams (about 2 teaspoons) from added sugar. (It's also sweetened with sucralose.)



Kashi Organic Berry Fruitful may be "made with real fruit," but 8 of the 9 grams of sugar in each serving are added.



Trader Joe's **Take a Hike Trek Mix with Walnuts, Cranberries, Chocolate & Toasted Sacha Inchi Seeds** has 9 grams of sugar (if you stop after just a 1/4-cup serving). But only 1 of those grams occurs naturally in its cranberries.



Kind **Fruit & Nut Bar** has 4 grams (1 teaspoon) of added sugar—just 8 percent of a day's worth. Another 3 grams comes from the fruit.

## Why for Weight?



**C**an extra protein from whey or soy help keep pounds off?

Researchers studied roughly 150 overweight or obese people who had lost an average of 28 pounds over two months on a low-calorie diet.

Each participant was then randomly assigned to take one of three protein powders—whey,

whey plus calcium, or soy—or a control powder (maltodextrin) to dissolve in water and drink with meals. The protein powders supplied about 45 grams of protein a day.

The volunteers reported feeling more full or satiated after a meal with the whey (with or without calcium) than after a meal with the soy or control powder. However, after six months there was no difference in how much weight the participants had regained (4½ pounds, on average) or in how much lean body mass (mostly muscle) they had.

The study was funded by Arla Foods, one of the largest producers of dairy foods in the world.

**What to do:** If higher-protein foods curb your appetite, be our guest. Just remember that powders, bars, shakes, or other protein-fortified foods aren't magic...or calorie-free.

[Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2017. doi:10.3945/ajcn.115.129528.](#)

## No Home Run for Fast-and-Feast Diets

**A**lternate-day fasting is no miracle diet. Researchers randomly assigned 69 overweight or obese people to either:

- eat only 75 percent of their usual food intake at all meals, or
- alternate between eating only 25 percent of their usual intake (about 500 calories) on "fast" days and 125 percent on "feast" days.

After six months, both groups had lost about the same amount of weight. To maintain the weight loss, each group then switched to a looser version of its diet for six more months.

The results: the alternate-day fasting group

had more dropouts (38 percent) than the ordinary-diet group (29 percent). And there was no difference in weight regained, muscle loss, blood sugar, insulin levels, or almost anything else.

**What to do:** Try on-and-off fasting—the 5:2 diet is less severe than alternate-day fasting—if it appeals to you. Does it have long-term benefits? It's too early to say. (See May 2017, cover story.)

[JAMA Intern. Med. 2017. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.0936.](#)

## Red Flag for Unnecessary PPIs

**P**roton pump inhibitors—PPIs like Prilosec, Prevacid, and Nexium—are the best way to reduce stomach acid in people with reflux disease or ulcers in the esophagus.

However, studies have linked long-term use of PPIs to an increased risk of bone fractures, dementia, *C. difficile* infections, and chronic kidney disease, though the evidence is weak.

In a new study, researchers tracked roughly 350,000 veterans who were prescribed PPIs or H2 blockers (milder drugs like Tagamet and Pepcid, which also lower stomach acid).

Over five years, the PPI users were 25 percent more likely to die. The longer they took the PPIs, the higher their risk.

But the causes of death weren't reported, so the researchers couldn't say why PPI users were more likely to die. They cautioned that something else about PPI takers could have caused the increased death rate.

**What to do:** Don't stop taking a prescribed or OTC PPI that your doctor recommended. But ask your doctor if an H2 blocker would work.

[BMJ Open 7: e015735. 2017.](#)

## Sweet Sizzlin' Green Beans



**W**ant your family to eat more veggies? Re-brand them.

Diners at a university cafeteria were more likely to select veggies when they had "indulgent" names (like

Twisted Citrus-Glazed Carrots) than when they had names that were "healthy restrictive" (Carrots with Sugar-Free Citrus Dressing) or "healthy positive" (Smart-Choice Vitamin C Citrus Carrots) or "basic" (Carrots).

The researchers didn't look at how much the diners ate.

**What to do:** Serve Tangy Ginger Bok Choy tonight.

[JAMA Intern. Med. 2017. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2017.1637.](#)





# Go Fish

BY KATE SHERWOOD



Ripe, juicy tomatoes and fresh fish—could it get any better? Don't have heirlooms? Use cherry or campari tomatoes. 🍅

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at [healthycook@cspinet.org](mailto:healthycook@cspinet.org).

## Tomato Coconut Cod Stew



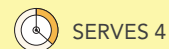
SERVES 4

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil</li> <li>1 small white onion, diced</li> <li>1 serrano pepper, seeded and minced (optional)</li> <li>2 cups chopped heirloom tomatoes</li> <li>1 cup canned light unsweetened coconut milk</li> <li>1 lb. cod fillets, cut into chunks</li> <li>½ tsp. kosher salt</li> <li>1 lime, cut into wedges</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In a deep skillet, heat the oil over medium heat until shimmering hot. Sauté the onion until soft, 2-3 minutes.</li> <li>2. Stir in the serrano, tomatoes, and coconut milk. Simmer until the tomatoes start to break down, about 5 minutes.</li> <li>3. Add the fish and reduce the heat to low. Simmer gently until the fish is cooked through, 3-5 minutes. Stir in the salt.</li> <li>4. Serve with the lime wedges.</li> </ol> |
|---|---|

Per serving (1 cup): calories 220 | total fat 11 g | sat fat 4 g | carbs 7 g | fiber 1 g | protein 21 g | sodium 310 mg



## Tomato-Roasted Tilapia



SERVES 4

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 lb. tilapia fillets</li> <li>2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil</li> <li>2 Tbs. mayonnaise</li> <li>½ tsp. paprika</li> <li>½ tsp. kosher salt</li> <li>2 large heirloom tomatoes, halved and thinly sliced</li> <li>1 sprig thyme</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.</li> <li>2. Place the fish on a lined, rimmed baking sheet.</li> <li>3. In a small bowl, whisk together the oil, mayonnaise, paprika, and salt. Spoon over the fish.</li> <li>4. Arrange the tomato slices on top of and around the fish. Top with the thyme sprig.</li> <li>5. Change the oven to broil. Broil the fish about 4 inches from the heat until the thickest part flakes easily with a fork, 7-10 minutes.</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

Per serving (3 oz. cooked fish): calories 240 | total fat 14 g | sat fat 2.5 g | carbs 4 g | fiber 1 g | protein 25 g | sodium 340 mg



# Say Cheese

## Pitfalls on the path to a better cheddar

BY LINDSAY MOYER & BONNIE LIEBMAN

**1 Size up servings.** Comparing cheese labels? Watch out for:

■ **Slice vs. block.** Cheeses that come sliced may look lower in calories, saturated fat, and sodium because their labels list a smaller serving (usually a ¾ oz. slice) than blocks or shredded cheese (1 oz.).

■ **Skinny slices.** It's not easy to tell whether *really* skinny slices like Kraft Slim Cut or Sargento Ultra Thin are better or worse than ordinary slices because the slims' and thins' labels show both a 1-slice (about ⅓ oz.) and a 3-slice (about 1 oz.) serving. Our chart shows 2 slices, which is closer to the weight of a typical slice.

**2 Look for sat fat steals.** Despite some man-bites-dog headlines, saturated fat still raises LDL ("bad") cholesterol and the risk of heart disease. Solution: eat less cheese... or look for our Best Bites, which have no more than 3 grams of sat fat per serving—roughly half what you'd get in full-fat cheese. They're usually labeled "lite," "2% milk," "50% less fat," "reduced fat," or "part-skim."

Bonus: our Best Bites are calorie bargains. An ounce of Cabot Sharp Light Cheddar, for example, supplies 8 grams of protein and 20 percent of a day's calcium for 70 calories. An ounce of the company's full-fat Vermont Sharp Cheddar (with roughly the same protein and calcium) will cost you 110 calories.

Why do most *fresh* mozzarellas meet our 3-gram sat fat limit even though they're full fat? It's because they contain more water than regular mozzarella (or most other cheeses).

**C**heese is on a roll. Since 1970, we've nearly tripled how much we eat. It's not just pizza and quesadillas. Cheese shows up on burgers, pasta, omelettes, burritos, sandwiches, salads, you name it.

Want a cheese that delivers the goods (flavor, protein, calcium) with the least bads (calories, saturated fat, salt)? Check out our 5 tips.

*The information for this article was compiled by Leah Ettman & Allison Pamper.*

**3 Have a salt strategy.** Looking for less sodium? Swiss (many have 40 to 60 milligrams of sodium per ounce) and fresh mozzarella (typically 80 to 100 mg) are naturally lower than other types. Our Best Bites have no more than 200 mg per serving. (See the photos below for our taste favorites.)

Tip: Skip Kraft fat-free shredded cheeses. Ounce for ounce, they have about 100 mg more sodium (280 mg) than shredded lower-fat Best Bites from Horizon Organic, Sargento, Trader Joe's, and Kraft's 2% Milk line.

**4 Dodge non-dairy deficits.** Most dairy-free (vegan) cheeses are nearly protein-free, with 0 or 1 gram per ounce instead of cheese's usual 5 to 8 grams. That's because they're mostly water, oil (coconut, canola, palm, or soybean), and starches.

Exception: Treeline Aged Treenut Cheeses get 5 grams of protein per ounce from cashews. And many non-vegan "cheese alternatives"—like Go Veggie Lactose Free or Trader Joe's Almond Mozzarella Style Shreds—add enough casein (a milk protein) to reach 6 grams of protein per ounce.

But only Go Veggie consistently adds calcium. Most Field Roast, Follow Your Heart, and Treeline have zip.

**5 Watch the claims.** You can ignore most of them. Almost all cheese is made with "simple" ingredients and has "no added sugar." Most hard cheeses are lactose-free—or close to it. (Lactose is milk sugar, so check the "Sugars" line on the Nutrition Facts label.) And *any* cheese that isn't processed (like Kraft Singles) can call itself "natural."



Lower-fat mozz that would do any pizza proud.



The best-tasting lower-fat swiss? Jarlsberg Lite. Period.



Trader Joe's rich, flavorful cheddar just missed a Best Bite.



Cabot Sharp Light isn't quite as sharp as Trader Joe's cheddar.



BelGioioso: a 70-calorie snack that makes us smile.



Try it with a handful of cherry tomatoes. M-m-m.



# Counting Curds

Best Bites (✓✓) have no more than 3 grams of saturated fat and 200 milligrams of sodium per serving. They also have at least 10 percent of the Daily Value for calcium and 5 grams of protein. Cheeses are ranked from least to most saturated fat, sodium, and calories, then most to least calcium. *Full-fat cheeses are in italics.*

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Cheddar &amp; Mozzarella (1 oz.)</b>					
✓✓ Cabot Sharp Extra Light Cheddar	60	1.5	200	20	9
✓✓ Galbani <i>Marinated Mozzarella Fresca</i>	70	2.5	100	10	5
Trader O' Joe's Lite Sharp Celtic Cheddar	70	2.5	210	25	8
✓✓ Galbani <i>Autentica Mozzarella Fresca</i>	70	3	80	10	5
✓✓ <i>BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella</i>	70	3	85	15	5
✓✓ <i>Boar's Head Fresh Mozzarella</i>	70	3	85	10	5
✓✓ Cabot Light Cheddar—Jalapeño or Sharp	70	3	170	20	8
Kerrygold Reduced Fat Dubliner	80	4	190	20	8
Cracker Barrel 2% Milk Extra Sharp Cheddar	90	4	240	20	7
Cabot Vermont Sharp Cheddar	110	6	180	20	7

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Cheddar, sliced (¾ oz., 1 slice unless noted)</b>					
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Medium (⅔ oz.)	60	2.5	125	15	6
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite (1 oz.)	70	3	170	20	8
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut Extra Sharp White (2 slices)	70	3	200	15	6
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut Sharp (2 slices)	70	3	200	15	6
Alpine Lace 25% Reduced Fat	70	3.5	135	15	6
Sargento Ultra Thin—Mild or Sharp (2 slices)	90	4	140	15	5

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Swiss, sliced (¾ oz., 1 slice unless noted)</b>					
✓✓ Jarlsberg Lite	50	1.5	100	20	7
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat	60	2	30	25	7
✓✓ Sargento—regular or Aged (⅔ oz.)	70	3	35	20	5
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut (2 slices)	70	3	55	25	7
✓✓ Alpine Lace 25% Reduced Fat	70	3	90	20	6
Sargento Ultra Thin—regular or Baby (2 slices) <sup>1</sup>	80	3.5	40	20	6
Jarlsberg	70	3.5	100	20	5
Boar's Head Lacey (1 oz.)	90	4	35	25	9

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Other cheeses, sliced (¾ oz., 1 slice unless noted)</b>					
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Provolone (⅔ oz.)	50	2	130	15	5
Boar's Head 44% Lower Sodium Provolone (½ oz.)	50	2.5	70	10	4
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Colby-Jack (⅔ oz.)	50	2.5	120	15	5
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut Mozzarella (2 slices)	70	2.5	120	15	6
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite Provolone (1 oz.)	80	2.5	120	20	9
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Pepper Jack (⅔ oz.)	60	2.5	135	15	5
✓✓ Sargento Mozzarella	60	2.5	140	15	5
Cracker Barrel Asiago (⅔ oz.)	70	3	120	10	4
✓✓ Sargento Provolone (⅔ oz.)	70	3	135	15	5
Cracker Barrel Provolone (⅔ oz.)	60	3	140	10	4
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut Colby Jack (2 slices)	70	3	160	15	7
✓✓ Alpine Lace 25% Reduced Fat Provolone	60	3	170	15	6
✓✓ Trader Joe's Part Skim Mozzarella (1 oz.)	80	3	170	20	8
Trader Joe's Lite Havarti (1 oz.)	80	3	210	20	8
Alpine Lace 25% Reduced Sodium Muenster	80	4.5	105	15	5
Sargento Ultra Thin Colby-Jack (2 slices)	80	4.5	140	15	5

## Strings, Sticks, etc. (¾ oz., unless noted)

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
✓✓ Weight Watchers String	50	1.5	140	20	6
✓✓ Sargento Light String	50	1.5	160	15	6
✓✓ Trader Joe's Light String (1 oz.)	60	1.5	180	20	6
✓✓ Weight Watchers Jalapeño String	50	1.5	200	20	6
✓✓ Kraft 2% Milk Twists	50	2	150	10	5
✓✓ Mini Babybel Light	50	2	160	15	6
✓✓ Kraft 2% Milk String	60	2	170	10	6
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite Mild Cheddar Snack Sticks	70	2.5	115	20	7
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Sticks <sup>1</sup>	60	2.5	135	15	5
✓✓ Kraft Twists	60	2.5	140	10	6
✓✓ Kraft Jalapeño String	70	2.5	150	15	6
✓✓ Mini Babybel Mozzarella Style	50	2.5	160	15	6
✓✓ Cracker Barrel 2% Milk Extra Sharp Cheddar	60	2.5	180	15	5
✓✓ <i>BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella Snacking (1 oz.)</i>	70	3	85	15	5
✓✓ <i>Mini Babybel Sharp Original</i>	60	3	140	15	5
✓✓ Weight Watchers Sticks <sup>1</sup>	70	3	170	20	7
✓✓ Trader Joe's String (1 oz.)	80	3	170	20	8
✓✓ Galbani Reduced Fat String (1 oz.)	70	3	180	25	8
✓✓ Galbani Part Skim String (1 oz.)	80	3	190	20	7
<i>Galbani Fresh Mozzarella Snacks (1 oz.)</i>	70	3.5	110	10	6
<i>Mini Babybel Original</i>	70	4	160	15	5
<i>Sargento Reduced Sodium Colby-Jack Sticks</i>	80	4.5	105	15	5
<i>Old Croc Sharp Cheddar Croc Bites</i>	90	5	135	15	5
<i>Sargento Snack Bites (7 bites, 1 oz.)<sup>1</sup></i>	110	6	200	20	7

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Shredded (1 oz.—about ¼ cup)</b>					
Kraft Fat Free—Cheddar or Mozzarella	45	0	280	25	9
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite Mozzarella	45	1	190	20	5
✓✓ Kraft 2% Milk Mozzarella	80	2.5	190	25	8
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Sharp Cheddar	90	3	180	25	8
✓✓ Horizon Organic Mozzarella	80	3	190	20	7
Kraft Mozzarella	90	3.5	150	20	7
Sargento Reduced Fat—except Sharp Cheddar <sup>1</sup>	80	3.5	190	25	8
Kraft 2% Milk—except Mozzarella <sup>1</sup>	90	3.5	230	20	7
Sargento Whole Milk Mozzarella	90	4.5	190	15	6

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Calcium (% DV)	Protein (g)
<b>Vegan &amp; Alternatives (1 oz. piece or slice, unless noted)</b>					
Trader Joe's Almond Mozzarella Style Shreds (¼ cup)	50	0	230	20	6
Go Veggie Lactose Free Shreds (¼ cup) <sup>1</sup>	70	0	390	30	6
Go Veggie Vegan Shreds (¼ cup) <sup>1</sup>	90	0.5	280	30	0
Follow Your Heart Vegan Gourmet <sup>1</sup>	70	1.5	150	0	1
Treeline Aged Treenut Cheese <sup>1</sup>	140	2	135	0	5
Daiya Shreds (¼ cup) <sup>1</sup>	90	2.5	260	6	1
Field Roast Chao Slices (¾ oz.)	60	4	180	0	0
Follow Your Heart Slices (¾ oz.)	60	4	180	0	0
Daiya Farmhouse Block <sup>1</sup>	80	4	190	10	1
Daiya Slices (¾ oz.) <sup>1</sup>	70	4.5	170	10	1

✓✓ Best Bite. <sup>1</sup>Average. Note: Best Bite refers to numbers, not taste.

**Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Saturated Fat:** 20 grams. **Sodium:** 2,300 milligrams.

**Calcium Daily Value (DV):** 1,000 milligrams. **Protein Daily Target:** 75 grams. Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.



## RIGHT STUFF

### Mornings Made Simple



Monday: cold cereal. Tuesday: oatmeal. Wednesday: cold cereal. Thursday: oatmeal. If that's the way your breakfasts tend to go, it might be time to hit the freezer case for some **Good Food Made Simple**.

Start with the **Egg Whites**. "Power-packed with 6 grams

of protein," says the company's website, "this AM boost made with cage-free egg whites is ready in just 80 seconds."

The ingredients: 35 calories' worth of mostly egg whites and only enough salt to give each pre-cooked patty 140 milligrams of sodium. Cholesterol? Zero. (It's all in the yolk.)

Throw one on a toasted whole wheat English muffin and stack it with avocado, tomato, spinach, or other veggies and maybe a thin slice of cheese. M-m-m.

That takes care of, say, Wednesday. On Thursday you can break out the **Buttermilk Waffles**.

Two of the cinnamon-scented, 100 percent whole-grain beauties will only run you 140 calories and 220 mg of sodium, with a bonus 3 grams of fiber and 4 grams of protein.

Our advice: Ditch the maple syrup and top them with plain low-fat greek yogurt and berries. Or try peanut butter and apple or banana slices.

You could do more, but if you're like us, breakfast can't be too simple.

[goodfoodmadesimple.com](http://goodfoodmadesimple.com)—(800) 535-3447



Photos: Good Food Made Simple (left), Brinker International (right), Kate Sherwood/CSP (center).

## FOOD PORN



### Benedict Arnold

"How can we enhance traditional brunch dishes by adding our own **Maggiano's** Italian-American twist?" asked the news release from **Maggiano's** corporate owners.



What says Italian-American more than meatballs? And what twist beats **The Meatball Benedict**: two English muffin halves, each topped with a meatball, tomato, a poached egg, and hollandaise sauce, plus a generous side of fried potatoes?

It's just one of "five decadent benedicts" on **Maggiano's** brunch menu. The others: **Chicken Francese**, **Smoked Salmon & Spinach**, **Crab Cake**, and **Nueske's Smoked Ham**. Good to hear, since "now every weekend has a special occasion—brunch!" says **Maggiano's**.

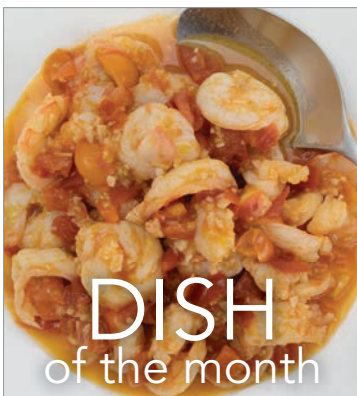
Think of **The Meatball Benedict** as a foot-long **Subway** Meatball Marinara sub with cheese, "enhanced" with half a stick of melted butter.

It's not easy to cram 1,480 calories and 52 grams of saturated fat (a 2½-day supply) into one dish. But the hollandaise—mostly butter and egg yolks—sure helps. (Bonus: thanks to the hollandaise and eggs, **The Meatball Benedict** also delivers 2½ days' worth of cholesterol.)

And the 3,400 milligrams of sodium—enough for today and half of tomorrow? It's the chain's gift that keeps on giving.

"Say hello to brunch!" says **Maggiano's** website. And say goodbye to your trim waist and unscathed arteries!

[maggianos.com](http://maggianos.com)—(972) 980-9917



### DISH of the month

#### Tomato Scampi

Sauté 1 cup chopped tomatoes and ½ lb. shrimp in 2 Tbs. olive oil with 1 Tbs. minced garlic until shrimp are cooked through, 1-3 minutes. Season with 1 Tbs. lemon juice and ¼ tsp. kosher salt. Serves 2.

## quick tip

The best place to store a head of delicate lettuce (like Boston): your salad spinner. Soak the separated leaves in cold water for 5 minutes, then drain. Spin dry, pour out the water, cover, and pop into the fridge. Presto! Crisp lettuce at the ready.