

Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST



FOOD MYTHS

Don't believe everything
you read online

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BREAST CANCER**
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the new
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Public Interest
America's Food and Health Watchdog

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS

M E M O

The Jungle



It's a jungle out there. Unproven claims litter the landscape. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher, is trying to clean things up. A few recent examples:

■ **Vizzy Hard Seltzer.**

"With antioxidant vitamin C from acerola superfruit," say the fruit-adorned labels. The implied message: *This* alcoholic drink is good for you.

Healthy alcohol is an oxymoron.

Drinking too much increases the risk of some cancers as well as heart disease, liver disease, and injuries.

In March, CSPI [urged](#) the FDA to stop Vizzy's claims, which violate the agency's fortification policy against adding vitamins to alcoholic beverages.

■ **Toddler milks & formulas.** "Brain & eye development," says Gerber's Good Start Infant Formula for children aged 9 to 24 months. "Plant-based protein for toddlers."

The multibillion-dollar infant-formula industry is trying to convince parents that children older than 12 months need formula.

They don't.

The beverages—made largely of fortified powdered soy or dairy milk, oil, and corn syrup solids or maltodextrin—typically supply added sugars. They certainly don't beat a diet of healthy foods.

In July 2020, CSPI and other public health groups petitioned the FDA to write new rules to regulate toddler formulas. And this February, we urged the agency to [stop](#) corporate giants from misleading parents by pushing formula for toddlers.

■ **Joseph Mercola.** Since the pandemic began, online salesman Joseph Mercola has been marketing supplements—from vitamins C and D to selenium, zinc, melatonin, elderberry, lipoic acid, probiotics, and more—to prevent or fight Covid-19.

Mercola even told people to intentionally contract the virus after taking those supplements, which his website sells. "Scary as it may sound, the best thing is to get the infection, and have a strong immune system to defend against it," he said.

After CSPI [reported](#) Mercola's illegal activity,

the FDA [warned](#) him to stop marketing certain supplements for Covid-19.

As he grudgingly complied, Mercola claimed to be a victim of conspiracies perpetuated by Bill Gates and other billionaires.

■ **Fertility supplements.** In 2019, CSPI

urged the FDA to crack down on 27 companies that were using names like FertilHerb for Women or Conception to market supplements that were illegally masquerading as infertility treatments.

This May, the agency finally warned five [companies](#) to stop making those or other claims. Hopefully, the feds will also go after the other fertility supplements that offer false hope to often-desperate women and men.

Large or small, some companies can't resist trying to make a buck off of unsuspecting consumers. Rest assured, we'll do our best to call out—and stop—their misleading claims.

Peter G. Lurie, MD, MPH, President
Center for Science in the Public Interest



Vitamin C doesn't make alcohol healthy.

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FOOD MYTHS

Don't believe everything you read online

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Looking for online advice about food and health? A quick Google search brings up plenty to choose from. But don't assume that the top results are reliable. Here's the lowdown on a half-dozen popular online myths.

MYTH Some foods make you more energetic.

"Even though all foods give you energy, some foods contain nutrients that could help increase your energy levels and maintain your alertness and focus throughout the day," says [Healthline.com](#).

"Here's a list of 27 foods that have been proven to help promote energy levels."

To scientists, "energy" means "calories," not alertness, focus, or how energetic you feel.

Only three of the 27 foods on Healthline's list—coffee, green tea, and yerba maté—can make you more alert. That's because they contain caffeine. (Dark chocolate has caffeine, but not as much.)

The proof for the other foods is flimsy, to put it mildly. A few examples:

■ **Bananas.** "They're an ex-

cellent source of complex carbs, potassium, and vitamin B6, all of which can help boost your energy levels," says Healthline.

That's it? No study measured alertness, focus, or get-up-and-go when people ate bananas?

A true deficiency of B vitamins or potassium—both rare—can cause fatigue. If you're not deficient, though, don't count on extra to boost energy.

■ **Brown rice.**

"Thanks to its fiber content, brown rice has a low glycemic index," says Healthline. "Therefore, it could help regulate blood sugar levels and promote steady energy levels throughout the day."

Oops. Brown rice isn't high in fiber, and it doesn't necessarily have a low glycemic index (rices vary)... not that either attribute would be proof that brown rice, or

any other food, makes you feel more energetic.¹

■ **Yogurt.** "The carbs in yogurt are mainly in the form of simple sugars, such as lactose and galactose," says Healthline. "When broken down, these sugars can provide ready-to-use energy."

So instead of steady energy levels from complex carbs, people should go for quick, "ready-to-use" energy from sugars? Which is it, Healthline?

Bottom Line: Don't rely on foods—or supplements—to keep you alert. For a quick pick-me-up, try a bout of exercise.

MYTH Alcohol prevents heart attacks and strokes.

"If you're in good shape, moderate drinking makes you 25 percent to 40 percent less likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or hardened arteries," says [WebMD.com](#) in its "Surprising ways alcohol may be good for you" slideshow.

Really? In many studies that have tracked thousands of people for years, those who have one or two drinks a day *do* have a lower risk of heart disease and some types of stroke than non-drinkers or heavy drinkers.^{2,3}

But scientists were never sure if alcohol—or perhaps the healthier lifestyles of moderate drinkers—explained the link...until they studied genes that lead people to drink less.

"In East Asian populations, there are common genetic variants which alter the metabolism of alcohol," explains Iona Millwood, senior epidemiologist at the University of Oxford.



Don't fall for claims that bananas—or any other food without caffeine—can make you more alert.

When you drink alcohol, an enzyme converts it to acetaldehyde. In most people, the acetaldehyde is quickly broken down. But a genetic variant of the enzyme in many people of East Asian descent slows that breakdown, making the acetaldehyde build up. That can cause uncomfortable flushing.

A second variant causes flushing—though less so—by speeding up the conversion of alcohol to acetaldehyde.

“People with these variants have an unpleasant flushing reaction when they drink,” says Millwood. So they drink far less.

When her study in roughly 510,000 people in China used genes to estimate alcohol intake, the results were clear.⁴

“There were no protective effects of moderate drinking for stroke,” says Millwood.

And since genes, not lifestyle, determined how much the participants drank, the results “are due to alcohol itself,” she adds.

What about heart attacks?

In a similar study—on roughly 262,000 people of European descent—participants who had the second variant consumed 17 percent less alcohol per week and had a 10 percent lower risk of heart disease than those without the variant.⁵

“For some time, observational studies have suggested that only heavy drinking was detrimental to cardiovascular health, and that moderate consumption may actually be beneficial,” says co-author Michael Holmes, now an associate professor and clinical epidemiologist at Oxford.

In fact, “individuals with a genetic predisposition to consume less alcohol had lower, not higher, odds of developing coronary heart disease,” concluded the study.

Bottom Line: Don’t expect alcohol to protect your health.

MYTH Omega-6 fats cause inflammation.

“Excessive amounts of omega 6 fatty acids can cause the body to create pro-inflammatory chemicals,” says [MedicalNewsToday.com](https://www.medicalnewstoday.com).

“Mayonnaise and salad dressings often have omega 6 fatty acids. Some oils such as corn, safflower, sunflower, and peanut oil can also contain the substance.”

And inflammation, says the website, “is commonly present in people with heart disease and stroke and may have a link to plaques forming in the arteries.”

One source of the claim: omega-6 fats like linoleic acid

can be converted to arachidonic acid in the body.

“And arachidonic acid can get converted to prostaglandins, which can set off inflammatory responses,” notes Frank Sacks, professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

But hardly any linoleic acid actually gets converted to arachidonic.⁶

“Although the pathway is there, it’s not active unless there’s a deficiency of omega-6 fats,” says Sacks.

And the body keeps a tight control on arachidonic acid levels.

“When you eat omega-6s, you’ll see an increase in linoleic acid, but you won’t see an increase in arachidonic acid or prostaglandins,” notes Sacks.

That may explain why studies find no increase in inflammatory markers when people are given foods rich in omega-6s.⁷

And when researchers tracked roughly 69,000 people from 30 studies, those with the highest blood levels of linoleic acid had a *lower* risk of cardiovascular disease.⁸ (The analysis was partly funded by mayo and margarine maker Unilever. Both foods are rich in omega-6 fats.)

What’s more, when people were randomly assigned to eat more omega-6 fats instead of saturated fats, they had a lower risk of heart disease.⁹

“There is no good clinical research that shows adverse effects for omega-6 fats,” says Sacks. “In fact, studies actually show beneficial effects.”

Bottom Line: Researchers still don’t

Foods that cause inflammation



Oils with omega-6 fats don’t cause inflammation. (Nor does the oatmeal that MedicalNewsToday inexplicably chose to show.)

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Surprising Ways Alcohol May Be Good for You

Helps Your Heart

Don’t expect alcohol to lower your risk of a stroke or heart attack.

know which foods cause inflammation, but there's no good evidence that omega-6 fats are to blame.

MYTH Glucose monitors help you lose weight.

"Glucose is your key to weight loss," says [Signos.com](https://www.signos.com), one of a handful of companies that sell continuous glucose monitors (CGMs).

"This slim wearable device provides continuous glucose monitoring and tracking 24/7."

Many people with type 1 diabetes—they produce no insulin—wear CGMs to let them know if their blood sugar is too high or low.

But it's not clear if anyone else needs the devices, especially if weight loss—not controlling blood sugar—is the goal.

(The FDA has approved CGMs only for people with diabetes, but doctors can write an "off label" prescription for anyone. "Rest assured, an independent physician will handle the [prescription](#) for you," says Signos, which charges \$99 to \$299 a month depending on how many months you [sign up](#) for.)

■ How accurate are CGMs?

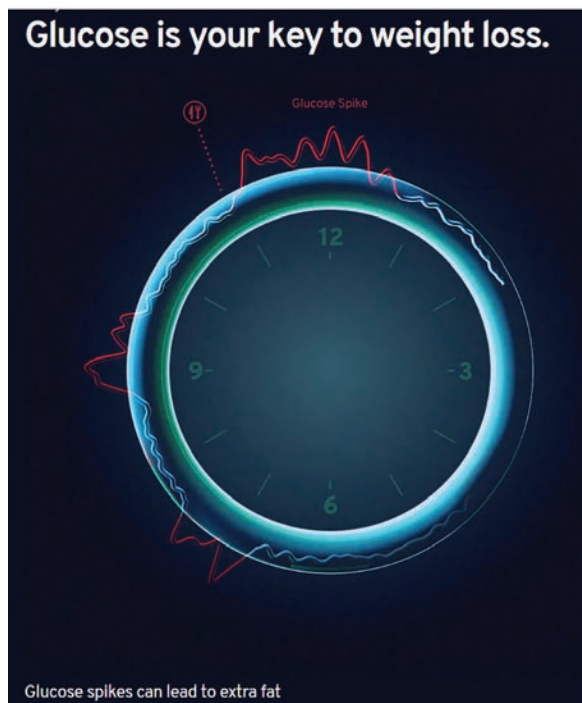
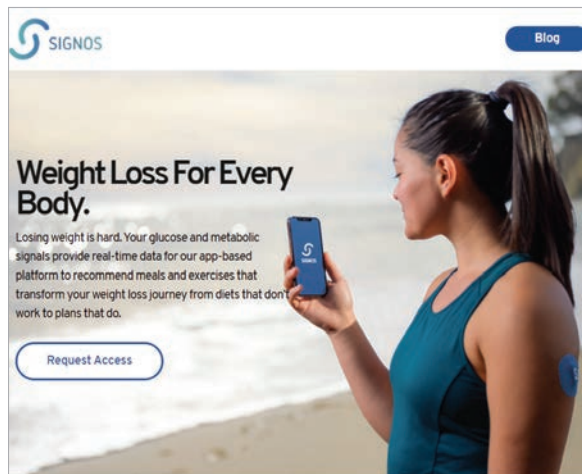
Clearly, CGMs are accurate enough to detect dangerously high or low glucose levels.

But "companies are promising to unlock your unique solution for a healthy metabolism by measuring your glucose responses," says Kevin Hall of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

How well can the devices measure glucose responses in people without diabetes? "We often found very different glucose responses to the same meals when people simultaneously wore two CGMs," says Hall.

His study tested the Dexcom G4 Platinum and the Abbott Freestyle Libre Pro in 16 volunteers who lived at an NIDDK lab for four weeks.¹⁰

Hall's team also looked at one CGM's results for the same meal eaten by the



There's no good evidence that continuous glucose monitors help people lose weight.

same person on two days roughly a week apart. The results were similar but far from identical.

"Are these devices sufficiently accurate and precise?" asks Hall. "I don't think we know yet."

■ Do CGMs help with weight loss?

"Certain foods can cause your glucose to spike beyond your current energy needs," says Signos. "Your body then converts this excess glucose into fat."

But there's no good evidence that people gain more—or lose less—weight if a meal causes a spike in glucose.

"We saw much lower glucose levels

on CGMs after meals when we fed people a low-carbohydrate diet as compared to a high-carbohydrate diet," says Hall.¹¹

"But these differences in CGM glucose didn't translate to the predicted differences in body fat. In fact, people lost more body fat on the diet that produced the greatest glucose spikes."

Bottom Line: CGMs can help people with diabetes control their blood sugar. But there's no good evidence that CGMs help people lose weight.

MYTH Coconut oil is a superfood.

"The unique combination of fatty acids in coconut oil may have positive effects on your health, such as boosting fat loss, heart health, and brain function," says the [Healthline article](#) "Top 10 evidence-based health benefits of coconut oil."

But is it *good* evidence?

■ **Coconut oil raises good cholesterol?** The fats in coconut oil "raise HDL (good) cholesterol in your blood, which may help reduce heart disease risk," says the article.

But raising HDL may not matter. "Changes in HDL cholesterol caused by diet or drug treatments can no longer be directly linked to changes in CVD," says the American Heart Association.⁹ (CVD is cardiovascular disease.)

■ Coconut oil is good for your brain?

"May boost brain function in Alzheimer's disease," says the article.

"May" is right. Healthline's two "trusted sources" refer to "preliminary" studies reporting that when Alzheimer's patients were given medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), only some of them did better on cognitive tests.^{12,13} (In one study, some did worse.) But coconut oil is only about 14 percent MCTs.

"Research is still preliminary, and no evidence suggests that coconut oil itself combats this illness," says Healthline.

Good to know.



Coconut oil is hardly a super food.

■ Coconut oil leads to weight loss?

“As some of the fatty acids in coconut oil can reduce appetite and increase fat burning, it may also help you lose weight,” says the article, which cites two studies as evidence.

One was a 2011 pilot study on 20 people that had no control group.¹⁴ (Yet Healthline still calls it a “trusted source.”)

In the second study, 40 women given coconut oil lost no more weight than those given soybean oil.¹⁵ (The authors claimed that waist size fell by ½ inch in the coconut oil eaters, but didn’t test to see if the difference between groups was statistically significant.)

What Healthline missed: When a 2018 study randomly assigned 91 people to consume roughly 4 tablespoons a day of extra-virgin coconut oil, butter, or olive oil for four weeks, none of the groups lost weight—or waist.¹⁶

“Coconut oil is still high in calories, so you should use it sparingly,” says Healthline. Got it.

Bottom Line: Ignore claims that coconut oil is a superfood.

MYTH Eggs are good for your heart.

“They’re heart healthy,” says the WebMD slideshow “Health Benefits of Eggs.”

“In a recent Chinese study, people who ate about an egg a day were almost 20% less likely than non-egg eaters to develop heart disease,” added WebMD.

But other studies disagree.

“Combining data from nearly 30,000 people in six U.S. studies, we found a 6 percent higher risk of cardiovascular disease for each half egg eaten per day,” says Linda Van Horn, professor of preventive medicine at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.¹⁷

But those “observational” studies can’t be sure that it isn’t something else about egg eaters that affects their risk.

“More convincing” are feeding studies that serve people diets that are higher or lower in eggs, said a 2020 American Heart Association advisory on high-cholesterol foods like egg yolks.¹⁸ (Van Horn served on the AHA panel that wrote the advisory.)

“Eggs can increase blood cholesterol levels,” says Van Horn. “So it’s best not to assume that you can eat as many as you want.”

The AHA’s advice:

■ **Healthy people** can eat up to one egg a day.

■ **Vegetarians** can eat more than one egg a day since they’re not getting cholesterol from meat, poultry, or seafood.

■ **Older people with normal cholesterol levels** can eat up to two eggs a day if they eat a healthy diet overall.

■ **People with high LDL (“bad”) cholesterol** should “be cautious” about eating eggs, especially if they have diabetes or are at risk for heart failure.

“If you have elevated cholesterol, if you have diabetes, or if you have over-

weight or obesity, you’re already at higher risk for developing cardiovascular disease,” cautions Van Horn.

And that’s not just a few of us, she notes.

“We have a population that has increasing rates of obesity. And that raises the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, you name it.”



Eggs aren’t heart healthy, but you don’t have to avoid them entirely.

Bottom Line: Stick with the AHA’s advice on eating eggs...and its advice to eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, with beans, whole grains, seafood, poultry, low-fat or fat-free dairy, nuts, and oils. 🍌

- ¹ *Diabetes Care* 31: 2281, 2008.
- ² *JAMA* 289: 579, 2003.
- ³ *BMJ* 2011. doi:10.1136/bmj.d671.
- ⁴ *Lancet* 393: 1831, 2019.
- ⁵ *BMJ* 2014. doi:10.1136/bmj.g4164.
- ⁶ *J. Lipid Res.* 46: 269, 2005.
- ⁷ *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 104: 6207, 2019.
- ⁸ *Circulation* 139: 2422, 2019.
- ⁹ *Circulation* 136: e1, 2017.
- ¹⁰ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 112: 1114, 2020.
- ¹¹ *Nat. Med.* 27: 344, 2021.
- ¹² *Neurobiol. Aging* 25: 311, 2004.
- ¹³ *Ann. N Y Acad. Sci.* 1367: 12, 2016.
- ¹⁴ *ISRN Pharmacol.* 2011. doi:10.5402/2011/949686.
- ¹⁵ *Lipids* 44: 593, 2009.
- ¹⁶ *BMJ Open* 8: e020167, 2018.
- ¹⁷ *JAMA* 321: 1081, 2019.
- ¹⁸ *Circulation* 141: e39, 2020.

Quick Studies

A snapshot of the latest research on diet, exercise, and more.

Vitamin B-12 & Stomach Acid



Too little stomach acid can lead to a vitamin B-12 deficiency, which can cause dementia.

Researchers measured B-12 levels in roughly 3,300 people aged 60 or older. Roughly 37 percent of them were taking proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs) like Prevacid to reduce stomach acid. Another 15 percent produced low levels of stomach acid due to atrophic gastritis (thinning of the stomach lining due to inflammation).

Low B-12 status—though not a true deficiency—was found in 38 percent of those with atrophic gastritis, 21 percent of PPI users, and 15 percent of others.

What to do: Over 50? Since atrophic gastritis is more common in older people and most don't know they have it, follow advice from the National Academy of Sciences to take at least 2.4 micrograms a day of vitamin B-12 from a supplement or fortified foods. That form of B-12—unlike the naturally occurring B-12 in meat, dairy, and eggs—can be absorbed without stomach acid.

[Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2021. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqab193.](#)

Some Like It Hot

When people were randomly assigned to imagine that they were going to order a cold—rather than hot—sandwich, they were more likely to also imagine ordering chips or a soda.

What to do: Be aware that you may subconsciously assume that cold food is less filling.

[Appetite 2021. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2020.105069.](#)



Dairy & Breast Cancer



Headed that dairy foods raise the risk of breast cancer? Relax.

Researchers pooled data on 1.1 million women in 21 studies who were followed for 6 to 20 years.

The scientists saw no clear link between dairy foods and breast cancer overall. However, women who consumed at least 2 oz. of yogurt a day had a 10 percent lower risk of estrogen-negative breast cancer than those who ate none. And women who ate at least 1 oz. of ricotta or cottage cheese a day had a 15 percent lower risk.

What to do: It's too early to know if something else about yogurt, ricotta, or cottage cheese eaters lowers their risk of breast cancer. But don't worry that dairy raises risk.

[Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2021. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqab097.](#)

Do the Fidget!

If you're sitting for hours at a time, even 2 minutes of light exercise every 20 minutes or so can help keep a lid on blood sugar after a meal.

But what if you're stuck in your seat?

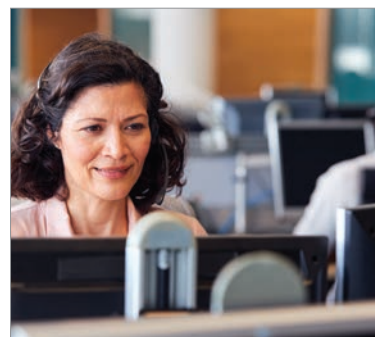
Researchers had 20 people

were told not to move their legs. On the other, they were told to fidget—that is, they tapped both heels and bounced both knees—for 2½ minutes, then rested for 2½ minutes, on and off for 3 hours.

The results: blood sugar and insulin levels were both significantly lower during the fidgeting than when they sat still.

What to do: Stuck in a seat—at work, in a car, on a plane, or elsewhere—for hours? Try tapping your heels and bouncing your knees. It might help if you've got some good music to fidget to. 🎵

[Obesity 29: 1146, 2021.](#)



with obesity sit for 3 hours after consuming a glucose-laden drink on two separate days. On one of the days, they

Just the Facts

How to decode the new Nutrition Facts label

BY LINDSAY MOYER

Finally! Most foods now disclose added sugars and carry an [improved](#) Nutrition Facts label. *Nutrition Action's* publisher, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, has [pushed for both since 1999](#).

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%
* 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

- Some [serving sizes](#) expanded to reflect how much the FDA calculates we typically eat. A few key changes:
 - ice cream went from ½ to ⅔ cup.
 - soda, tea, coffee, and water jumped from 8 to 12 oz.
 - most cereals went from 1 oz. to nearly 1½ oz. (40 grams).
 - muffins and bagels doubled, from 2 to nearly 4 oz. (110 grams).
- Whatever the food, the size of the package also matters. Less than two servings per container? A “serving” is now the whole package. Two to three servings? Most labels have to tack on a second column that gives Nutrition Facts for the entire package.

ADDED SUGARS

- “Added Sugars” [means](#) sugars that come from sweeteners (cane sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, agave, honey, etc.).
- Why the “Includes”? The “Total Sugars” line right above it includes the naturally occurring sugars in milk, fruit, tomatoes, carrots, etc., *plus* any added sugars.
- 10 grams of added sugars is 20% of the Daily Value (50 grams). (A 30-gram DV would be better, but it’s not up to us. A healthy diet leaves little room for sugar’s empty calories. See Nov. 2020, p. 3.)

MILLIGRAMS, ETC.

- [Vitamins and minerals](#) now list their amounts in mg (milligrams), mcg (micrograms), etc., not just as the “% Daily Value.” That helps if *you* need less or more than the DV (see below).
- Vitamin D is now listed in mcg, not IU. (1 mcg = 40 IU.)

DAILY VALUES

- To match the [latest advice](#) for healthy bones, the DV for vitamin D doubled, from 10 to 20 mcg (800 IU). That’s what adults over 70 need. Adults 70 and under need only 15 mcg a day.
- The calcium DV rose from 1,000 to 1,300 mg. But premenopausal women and men up to age 70 still need only 1,000 mg a day. Postmenopausal women and men over 70 need 1,200 mg. (The 1,300 mg is for children age 9 to 18.)

VITAMINS & MINERALS

- Vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium must be listed on all labels since they’re linked to major health problems.
- If a food adds—or makes a claim about—any other nutrient, it must also be listed. (Labels can show other vitamins, but it’s voluntary. Don’t see them? That may just mean that the company has chosen not to draw attention to them.)

FIBER: WHAT COUNTS?

Fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains are rich in intact fiber that may help prevent constipation, heart disease, and more. But the “Dietary Fiber” number on the Nutrition Facts label can also include processed fibers like inulin, polydextrose, soluble corn fiber, or any others that the [FDA says](#) have at least one health benefit.

The catch: The labels don’t tell you *which* benefit sealed the deal. Does the fiber boost regularity? Lower your cholesterol? Do something else you may not care about?

For example, a Quest Cookies & Cream Protein Bar has 15 grams of fiber—just over half the Daily Value. But it’s largely soluble corn fiber. Its benefit? It boosts calcium absorption.

Beans, bran, and other real foods have a mix of intact fibers with a mix of benefits. Don’t expect bars, shakes, or other foods with processed fibers to match them.



WHAT'S YOUR SERVING?

The serving size for Target’s Favorite Day Sliced Blueberry Mini Bagels is the number that comes closest to the FDA’s new, larger serving size (110 grams).

That’s *three* mini bagels.

Is that a recommendation? Nope.

By law, the FDA must set serving sizes that reflect what Americans eat, not what they *should* eat. And a typical U.S.-size bagel has about 4 servings of grain—[enough for a full day](#).

How much should we eat? A *single* mini bagel comes pretty close to a *recommended* serving of grain.

Some ice cream bars and pops

also call two or three bars a serving. Ignore them.

In contrast, the FDA’s serving size for pasta is surprisingly small—2 oz., which is just 1 cup cooked! If you eat more, multiply.



JUICE SUGARS

A 15 oz. Naked Protein Greens shake has a whopping 390 calories and 50 grams of total sugars.

How many of those 50 grams count toward your 50-gram Daily Value for added sugars? None, according to the “0%” on the label.

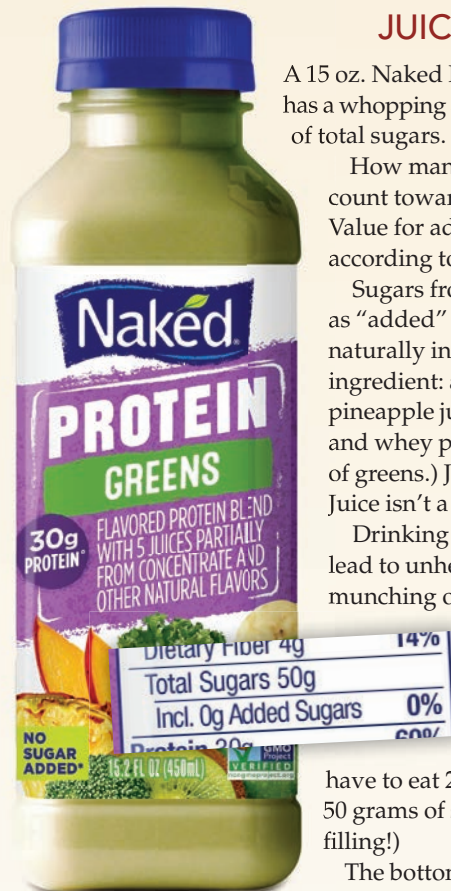
Sugars from juice don’t count as “added” because they occur naturally in the fruit. Naked’s first ingredient: apple juice. (It also has pineapple juice, fruit purées, soy and whey proteins, and a smidgen of greens.) Just don’t kid yourself. Juice isn’t a health food.

Drinking juice is more likely to lead to unhealthy weight gain than munching on whole fruit.

That’s because liquids don’t curb your hunger like solid foods that you chew. (You’d

have to eat 2½ apples to get Naked’s 50 grams of sugars. Talk about filling!)

The bottom line: Limit added sugars *and* juice sugars.



WHITED OUT

Why is there often no “Added Sugars” line on sweeteners like white or brown sugar or honey?

Thank lobbyists for the honey and maple syrup industries. An “Added Sugars” line, they argued, would make it look like companies had added sugar to their honey or syrup. So the FDA lets sweetener labels omit the words “Added Sugars.”

But labels still count all of a sweetener’s sugars when they calculate the %DV—that is, how much of a

day’s added sugars you’re getting (see photo). 🍌



The Healthy Cook

Get Saucy!

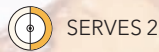


These beans go with the flow. No cannellinis? Try chick-peas. No pattypan? Cut summer squash or zucchini into bite-size pieces. No mini peppers? Use a bell pepper. 🌶️

Pan-Roasted Vegetables over Saucy Beans

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Tbs. + 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil | 1 15 oz. can no-salt-added cannellini beans, drained |
| 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced | ½ lb. small pattypan, cut into wedges |
| 4 ripe plum tomatoes, diced (see note) | 8 mini bell peppers, quartered lengthwise |
| ¼ tsp. kosher salt | |

1. In a medium pan over medium heat, heat 1 Tbs. oil until shimmering. Sauté the garlic until lightly browned, 1–2 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and salt. Simmer until thickened, 7–10 minutes. Stir in the beans and heat through, 1–2 minutes.
2. In a large pan over medium-high heat, heat the remaining 1 Tbs. oil until shimmering. Sauté the pattypan until lightly tender-crisp, 2–3 minutes. Remove from the pan. Add the peppers to the pan and sauté until charred in spots, 3–5 minutes.
3. Spoon the beans into 2 bowls. Top with the pattypan and peppers.



SERVES 2

PER SERVING (2 cups): calories 350 | total fat 16 g | sat fat 2 g | carbs 44 g | fiber 12 g | total sugar 10 g | added sugar 0 g | protein 13 g | sodium 320 mg

NOTE: If you'd prefer to peel the tomatoes (like I do), cut a shallow X in the bottom of each one, blanch them in boiling water for 30 seconds, then cool under running water. The skins will easily peel off.



For more saucy recipes

Go to nutritionaction.com/saucy for **Chicken Mole** and **The New Wedge Salad**

For cooking advice

Write to Chef Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org

Cracking the Code

Don't bother puttin' on the Ritz

BY LINDSAY MOYER

Crackers have a healthier image than chips, but many don't deserve it. Who needs those refined carbs? Not *these* crackers. They're 100 percent whole grain (or seeds) and delish. Many go light on salt, so there's room for cheese (turn the page), hummus, etc.

Rye Rave

Trying to load up on intact fiber from whole grains and other plant foods? Say hi to rye!

Four **Finn Crisp Original Sourdough Rye Thins** deliver six grams of whole-grain rye fiber—20 percent of a day's worth—for just 80 calories and 140 milligrams of sodium.

Crispy Finn Thins are tasty enough to eat plain. For a thicker cracker, try

Wasa Light Rye or Whole Grain Crispbread. Cue the toppings!



Beary Good

Graham crackers' namesake flour comes from whole-grain wheat. The irony? Many brands—like Honey Maid and Nabisco—add more (refined) “enriched flour” than graham flour. That's why **Kodiak's** fully whole-grain **Cinnamon** (or **Chocolate** or **Honey**) **Graham Bear Bites** are a find. Mmm.

Just don't kid yourself. A 15-graham serving still has 1½ teaspoons of added sugar. Bottom line: Even whole-grain graham crackers are closer to cookies than crackers.



Flax Attack

Many “grain-free” crackers contain some fiber-poor, protein-poor starches (tapioca, potato, etc.).

A big step up: seeds.

Sea Salt Flackers are just flax seeds, vinegar, and salt. The seeds are soaked, then dehydrated, so they're surprisingly crispy. And you get good fats and plant

protein (6 grams in 10 flackers), not refined starch.

They are a bit salty (260 mg of sodium) and pricey (\$6 for 5 oz.), though. For seeds plus brown rice and quinoa, try **Mary's Gone Crackers** or **Super Seed Crackers**.



Super Shredded

It's hard to go wrong with **Triscuits** (or a Triscuit knockoff).

They're whole-grain shredded wheat, not flour. That's rare in the sea of white flour and “made with whole grain” impostors.

Bonus: no added sugar! (A serving of Wheat Thins has 1 teaspoon.) And **Hint of Sea Salt Triscuits** have just 50 mg of sodium per serving. Win-win.



Almost a Cracker

Need to avoid gluten or cut salt? **Lundberg Organic Lightly Salted Brown Rice Thin Stackers** to the rescue. A stack of four has just 70 mg of sodium and 110 calories.

Even lower in sodium (30 mg) is a six-thin, 110-calorie serving of **Trader Joe's Organic Brown Rice Cake Thins**.



Top Seed

“These are really seedy, really crunchy, savory flats made for us in Norway,” says **Trader Joe's Seeds & Grains Crispbread**.

Nordic countries do crackers right. They're bread stand-ins.

The flats are studded with good stuff like whole sunflower, sesame, and flax seeds, plus whole grains like rye flour and oatmeal, and intact fibers like oat bran and wheat bran.

Joe's **Gluten Free Crispbread** (no wheat or rye) comes close. Also gluten-free: **Whole Foods 365 Oat & Seed Crispbreads**, which are heavy on the oats and flax seeds.

For a little sweetness, try **GG Raisin & Honey Scandinavian Fiber Crispbread** (oats, wheat bran, sunflower and flax seeds, raisins, honey, and whole wheat).





Say Cheese!

The top dairy and plant-based picks

BY LINDSAY MOYER & KAAMILAH MITCHELL

Does the dairy fat in cheese, whole milk, and cream ward off heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and weight gain, as some headlines suggest? Not according to the best evidence from randomized trials. In fact:

- full-fat dairy's saturated fats raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol, which causes heart disease,
- dairy foods don't lower blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes or the metabolic syndrome, and
- eating full-fat instead of low-fat dairy leads to weight gain. (See Sept. 2019 and Mar. 2021, p. 3.)

Are plant-based cheeses healthier? Sadly, no. Many are largely water, starches, and coconut oil, so they're low in protein and as high in unhealthy fat as dairy. Only some add calcium.

Almond and cashew cheeses from **Miyoko's**, **Treeline**, and **Kite Hill** manage to do better. It's a pity they're so pricey.

Plant-based cheeses that didn't come close to dairy cheese's calcium or protein got Honorable Mentions as long as they met our Best Bite criteria for saturated fat and sodium. If you go plant-based, look for your calcium and protein elsewhere.

CHEDDAR, MOZZARELLA, ETC.

Hard cheeses like cheddar are among the saturated-fat heavyweights. Just 1 oz. (a 1-inch cube) of full-fat cheddar has around 6 grams of sat fat—30 percent of a day's worth.

Solution: Find a sharp, strong-tasting cheese and use less. Or try one of our Best Bites. Most are lite, 2%, or reduced-fat.

Interestingly, most full-fat *fresh* mozzarellas also make the cut (or just miss). Why? They contain more water.

Cheese intake has tripled since 1970. That wouldn't be due to how much pizza we eat, would it? Or that it's served on nearly every burger, burrito, sandwich, or salad? Nah.

We looked for the best plant-based "cheeses," lower-fat dairy cheeses (like fresh mozzarella or goat), and lower-fat versions of cheddar, Swiss, etc.

Check out the photos for some great-tasting Best Bites, Honorable Mentions, and near misses.

Even rich-tasting burrata—fresh mozzarella filled with cheese shreds soaked in cream—nears Best Bite territory. **BelGioioso's** missed by just 1 gram of sat fat (though it has only 3 grams of protein). Try it on a salad with uber-ripe tomatoes.

Cheeses that come sliced may look lower in calories, sat fat, sodium, etc., because

their labels list a smaller serving (usually a ¾ oz. slice) than blocks or shredded cheese (1 oz.). Our chart shows numbers for 2 slices of *thin-cut* cheeses. That's closest to the weight of a typical slice.

Shaving sodium? Try Swiss (many have just 50 to 100 mg per serving) or fresh mozzarella (80 to 100 mg).

Plant-based: Many blocks or rounds of cashew-based **Miyoko's** and **Treeline** won Honorable Mentions or came close. And **Miyoko's Farmhouse Cheddar Slices** (made with oat milk, beans, and coconut oil) melt like a dream.

Best Bites have: No more than 3 grams of sat fat and 200 mg of sodium in 1 oz. or 1 slice.

SHREDDED

Cutting back on cheese? Add a bevy of vegetables, and think of shredded cheeses as a garnish.

Imagine a whole-wheat quesadilla or bean burrito stuffed with sautéed peppers and onions with a light sprinkle of melty cheese. Or skip the cheese, and top your pizza with mushrooms, artichoke hearts, roasted vegetables, or raw arugula.



Cabot Lite50 White Sharp Cheddar. Misses a Best Bite by just 20 mg of sodium.



Galbani Original Fresh Mozzarella. The creamy star of your next salad.



Jarlsberg Lite Swiss. A pop of flavor to upgrade your next sandwich.



Miyoko's Organic Cashew Milk Mozzarella. Tastes good melted or unmelted.

Photos: Natalia Klenova/stock.adobe.com (top); Bottom (l to r): Cabot Creamery, Lindsay Moyer/CSPI, Jarlsberg, Miyoko's Creamery.



Kraft 2% Mozzarella. A trusty lower-fat mozz for your pizza.



Oatzarella Original. Melty oat cheese! Too bad it's got no protein.



Athenos Reduced Fat Feta. Perfect for a late-summer watermelon-feta salad.



Daisy 2% Low Fat Cottage Cheese. Top with fresh fruit or juicy raw veggies.

The good news: Plenty of 2%, lite, or part-skim dairy shreds taste great and get Best Bites.

Plant-based: **Oatzarella** manages to coax a super-meltable cheesy texture out of oats, olive oil, agar agar (vegan gelatin), and a handful of other ingredients. (If you're vegan or allergic to dairy, always read the fine print. **Trader Joe's Almond Mozzarella Style Shreds** "cheese alternative" and **Go Veggie Lactose Free Mozzarella Style Shreds**, for example, contain casein, which is a milk protein.)

Best Bites have: No more than 3 grams of sat fat and 200 mg of sodium in 1 oz. (¼ cup).

COTTAGE CHEESE

When snack time rolls around, don't forget cottage cheese. With 2% (aka low-fat), you get around 14 grams of protein for just 80 or so calories and 1½ grams of sat fat. That's on a par with plain Greek 2% yogurt.

Cottage cheese has no tang, so it doesn't need added sugar. Want a little sweetness? Mix in chopped pears, apples, peaches, or berries. Or go savory (try cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, or leftover roasted veggies).

Plant-based: We didn't find any.

Best Bites have: No added sugar and no more than 1½ grams of sat fat and 350 mg of sodium in ½ cup.

CREAM CHEESE

Cream cheese is more like cream than cheese. A serving—two level tablespoons—of full-fat typically supplies no more than a paltry 2 grams of protein and 2 percent of a day's calcium, but costs you 4½ to 6 grams of sat fat and 80 to 100 calories.

Light cream cheeses shave off roughly half that sat fat. So do most whipped ones—because you're getting more air.



Philadelphia Original Whipped Cream Cheese. Light and fluffy.



Cedar's Labne. Like the label says: "Tangy like yogurt, spreads like cream cheese."



Kite Hill Plain Cream Cheese Alternative. A creamy almond spread.



Whole Foods 365 Part-Skim Ricotta. Pick up any brand's part-skim ricotta.

(We didn't look at fruit-flavored cream cheeses, which typically add more sugar than fruit.)

Or try labne, an ultra-creamy strained yogurt spread. Yum! Some brands just miss a Best Bite.

Plant-based: **Kite Hill** and **Treeline** churn out almond and cashew cream cheeses that rose to the top of our Best Bite ranking. And even though **Miyoko's**—made from cashews plus coconut—contains more sat fat, it still has less than most dairy cream cheeses.

Best Bites have: No added sugar and no more than 3 grams of sat fat and 200 mg of sodium in 2 Tbs.

RICOTTA & FARMER CHEESE

To find a Best Bite, look no further than part-skim ricotta or its cousin, farmer cheese. Spread some on whole-grain toast. Tablespoon for tablespoon, you'll get about half the calories of light cream cheese. Layer sliced fruit on top. Mmm.

Plant-based: Not too many options here. You could try **Kite Hill's** healthy-fat-rich almond ricotta, though it misses an Honorable Mention by 130 mg of sodium.

Best Bites have: No more than 3 grams of sat fat and 100 mg of sodium in ¼ cup.

FETA

Feta's Achilles' heel, of course, is salt. But at least its punchy flavor means you may be able to get by with less. The surprise: Many full-fat fetas, like **Trader Joe's** and **Whole Foods 365**, just miss our sat fat cut-off.

Plant-based: Alas, vegan fetas from **Follow Your Heart** and **Violife** missed by a mile. The culprit: coconut oil.

Best Bites have: No more than 2 grams of sat fat and 350 mg of sodium in 1 oz.



Chavrie Original Goat Cheese. Or try Trader Joe's Goat's Milk Creamy Cheese.



Treeline Creamy Scallion French-Style Cheese. Cashew "cheese" at its finest.



Montchevre Goat Cheese Medallions. Want just a little? Go mini.



Cracker Barrel 2% Extra Sharp Yellow Sticks. Think string cheese for grown-ups.

SPREADABLE, GOAT CHEESE, & BRIE

Light brie is a Best Bite, though it lacks full-fat brie's signature richness. Instead, try creamy crowd pleaser **Chavrie Original Goat Cheese** pyramid or lookalike **Trader Joe's Goat's Milk Creamy Cheese** on your crackers (see p. 11).

Searching for a goat cheese log or crumbles? Try **Vermont Creamery Classic Crumbles** or **Montchevre Medallions**. Each missed a Best Bite by just ½ gram of sat fat. Small-household bonus: The individually wrapped medallions can wait in your fridge until you're ready for them.

Plant-based: The folks at **Treeline** sure know their way around a cashew. One taste of their creamy, tangy **French-Style Cheese**, and we were wowed.

Best Bites have: No more than 3 grams of sat fat and 200 mg of sodium in 2 Tbs. (spreadables) or 1 oz. (brie & goat cheese).

CHEESE SNACKS

Take your pick. Many strings and sticks are only ¾ oz. and either "part-skim" or "2% milk." Just 50 to 80 calories apiece.

We didn't look at single-serve refrigerated cheese snack packs like **Sargento Balanced Breaks**, **Babybel Cheese & Crackers**, or **Oscar Mayer P3**. Many include sugar-sweetened dried fruit, chocolate-covered nuts, white-flour crackers, or processed meat (like bacon or deli meat).

Instead, why not grab an apple or clementine or a reusable container of cherry tomatoes or cucumber slices to go with your cheese string, stick, or Babybel round? And who can resist two crisp apple slices with a thin-sliced cheese like **Kraft Slim Cut** sandwiched in between them?

Plant-based: **Miyoko's Cheddar Sticks** miss an Honorable Mention by just ½ gram of sat fat.

Best Bites have: No more than 3 grams of sat fat and 200 mg of sodium in 1 stick, string, or round. 🍷

Cheese, Please

For our Best Bite (✓✓) criteria, check the "Best Bites have" paragraph at the end of each section in the text. Honorable Mentions (✓) are plant-based cheeses (●) that meet our criteria but have less calcium or protein than dairy cheese. Cheeses are ranked from least to most saturated fat, then sodium, then most to least protein, then calcium.

Cheddar, Mozzarella, etc.—blocks & rounds (1 oz.)

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)
✓ Oatzarella Cheese Wheel Original ●	50	1	190	0	0%
✓ Follow Your Heart Mozzarella, with soy ●	80	1.5	95	1	0%
✓ Treeline Aged Artisanal Cracked Pepper ●	140	1.5	140	5	0%
✓ Miyoko's Aged Herbes de Provence ●	130	1.5	180	4	2%
✓ Miyoko's Aged Sharp English Farmhouse ●	110	1.5	200	4	0%
✓ Cabot Lite75 White Sharp Cheddar	60	1.5	220	9	25%
✓✓ Jarlsberg Lite Swiss	70	2	95	9	20%
✓ Treeline Aged Artisanal Classic ●	140	2	125	5	0%
✓ Cabot Lite50 White Sharp Cheddar	70	2.5	220	8	20%
✓✓ Galbani Fresh Mozzarella Original	70	3	100	5	8%
✓✓ Cabot Lite50 Jalapeño Cheddar	70	3	170	8	20%
✓ Miyoko's Organic Cashew Milk Mozzarella ●	60	3	210	1	0%
✓ BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella	70	3.5	85	5	8%
✓ Cracker Barrel 2% Vermont Sharp White	90	3.5	190	7	15%

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)
Cracker Barrel 2% Extra Sharp Yellow	90	3.5	240	7	15%
✓ Miyoko's Farmhouse Cheddar ●	70	3.5	270	3	10%
BelGioioso Burrata	70	4	60	3	6%
Kerrygold Reduced Fat Dubliner	80	4	190	8	15%
Atalanta Halloumi	80	4	260	6	10%
✓ Daiya' ●	80	4.5	220	1	10%
✓ Miyoko's Double Cream' ●	120	5	160	3	0%
✓ Follow Your Heart Mozzarella, soy free ●	80	6	260	0	0%

Cheddar, Mozzarella, etc.—sliced (1 slice, about ¾ oz., unless noted)

✓✓ Jarlsberg Lite Swiss	50	1.5	70	7	15%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Provolone	50	2	130	5	10%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Swiss	70	2.5	65	7	15%
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut Mozzarella (2 slices)	70	2.5	120	6	10%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Colby-Jack	60	2.5	120	5	10%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Medium Cheddar	60	2.5	125	6	15%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Pepper Jack	50	2.5	150	4	10%
✓✓ Whole Foods 365 Reduced Fat Mild Cheddar	70	2.5	170	6	10%
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut 2% Swiss (2 slices)	70	3	55	7	15%
✓✓ Alpine Lace 25% Reduced Fat Swiss	70	3	90	6	15%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite Havarti (1 oz.)	70	3	190	8	20%
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut 2% Extra Sharp White Cheddar (2 slices)	70	3	200	6	15%
✓✓ Kraft Slim Cut 2% Sharp Cheddar (2 slices)	70	3	200	6	15%

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)
Miyoko's Farmhouse Cheddar (1 oz.) ●	70	3.5	270	3	10%
Sargento Ultra Thin (2 slices) ¹	80	4	120	5	10%
Daiya ¹ ●	60	4	170	0	10%
Field Roast Chao ¹ ●	60	4	180	0	0%
So Delicious ¹ ●	60	4.5	180	0	0%
Shredded (1 oz., about ¼ cup)					
✓✓ Trader Joe's Almond Mozzarella Style Shreds	70	0	160	5	15%
Kraft Fat Free Cheddar	45	0	280	9	20%
Oatzarella Original ●	60	0.5	250	0	0%
Go Veggie Lactose Free Mozzarella Style Shreds	70	0.5	340	6	20%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite Mexican Blend	80	2.5	170	8	20%
✓✓ Kraft 2% Mozzarella	80	2.5	190	8	20%
Sargento Reduced Fat Mozzarella	70	2.5	210	8	15%
Daiya Original Mozzarella Style Shreds ●	100	2.5	340	1	2%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Lite 3 Cheese Blend	80	3	135	8	20%
✓✓ Whole Foods 365 Part-Skim Mozzarella	80	3	170	8	15%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Sharp Cheddar	90	3	180	8	20%
Kraft 2% Cheddar—Mild or Sharp	90	3.5	230	7	15%
Miyoko's Farmhouse Cheddar ●	70	3.5	260	3	10%
Trader Joe's Dairy Free Cashew Mozzarella Style Shreds ●	80	5	230	0	0%
So Delicious Shreds ¹ ●	90	6	210	1	0%
Cottage Cheese (½ cup)					
✓✓ Breakstone's 2% Lowfat, 40% Less Sodium	100	1.5	250	13	10%
✓✓ Good Culture Low-fat Classic	80	1.5	340	14	8%
✓✓ Daisy 2% Low Fat	90	1.5	350	13	8%
Breakstone's 2% Lowfat	100	1.5	360	13	10%
Horizon Organic 2% Lowfat	100	1.5	400	14	15%
Good Culture Whole Milk Classic	110	3	340	14	8%
Daisy 4%	110	3	390	13	8%
Cream Cheese (2 Tbs., tub, unless noted)					
✓✓ Kite Hill—Everything or Garden Veggie ●	70	0	180	2	2%
✓✓ Kite Hill Chive ●	60	0	200	2	2%
✓✓ Kite Hill Plain ●	70	0	200	2	2%
✓✓ Treeline—Chive & Onion or Plain ●	90	1	130	2	2%
✓✓ Philadelphia Whipped Original	50	2.5	85	1	0%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Light, block	70	2.5	90	3	6%
✓✓ Miyoko's Organic Cashew Milk—Classic Plain, Everything, Lox, or Savory Scallion ¹ ●	90	2.5	115	3	0%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Soft Spreadable Light	70	3	95	3	8%
✓✓ Trader Joe's Organic Light Whipped	60	3	105	3	4%
Cedar's Labne	50	3.5	60	1	4%
Philadelphia ½ Less Fat	60	3.5	120	3	2%
Philadelphia ½ Less Fat Chive & Onion	60	3.5	150	3	2%
Karoun Original Labne	60	4	40	1	2%
Philadelphia ½ Less Fat, block	70	4	120	2	0%
Daiya Plain ●	80	4.5	120	0	0%
Violife Just Like Cream Cheese Original ●	70	6	140	0	0%
Ricotta & Farmer Cheese (¼ cup)					
✓✓ Sargento Light Ricotta	60	1	60	4	10%
Kite Hill Ricotta Alternative ●	140	1	230	5	4%
✓✓ Lifeway Farmer Cheese	80	2.5	25	7	8%
✓✓ Whole Foods 365 Farmer Cheese	80	2.5	25	6	8%

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Sodium (mg)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)
✓✓ Galbani Ricotta, Made with Part Skim Milk	80	2.5	60	4	15%
✓✓ Whole Foods 365 Part-Skim Ricotta	80	3	70	6	15%
Galbani Ricotta, Made with Whole Milk	100	5	65	4	10%
Feta (1 oz. crumbles, unless noted)					
✓✓ Président Fat Free, chunk or crumbles ¹	35	0	260	6	8%
Athenos Fat Free	30	0	430	7	10%
✓✓ Athenos Reduced Fat	50	2	340	5	4%
Whole Foods 365	70	2.5	340	6	10%
Trader Joe's	70	2.5	340	6	8%
Follow Your Heart ●	80	6	270	0	4%
Violife Just Like Feta, block ●	90	7	190	0	0%
Goat Cheese (1 oz.)					
✓✓ Trader Joe's Goat's Milk Creamy Cheese	45	2.5	135	3	4%
✓✓ Chavrie Original, spreadable pyramid	50	3	125	3	2%
Montchevre Medallions	70	3.5	40	5	4%
Vermont Creamery Classic, crumbles	70	3.5	55	5	2%
Vermont Creamery Classic, log	80	4	60	5	2%
Trader Joe's Chevre, log	80	4.5	80	5	0%
Chavrie Original, log	90	5	85	4	2%
Alouette crumbles	90	5	140	6	2%
Spreadables & Brie (2 Tbs. or 1 wedge, unless noted)					
✓ Kite Hill Soft Spreadable ¹ ●	60	0	115	2	2%
✓✓ The Laughing Cow Blends ¹	35	0	125	2	10%
✓ Treeline French-Style (1 oz.) ¹ ●	100	1	95	4	0%
✓✓ The Laughing Cow Creamy—Light or flavors ¹	30	1	180	2	10%
✓✓ Rondelé Light Garlic & Herbs	45	2	150	2	4%
✓✓ The Laughing Cow Creamy Original	50	2.5	180	2	10%
✓✓ Rondelé Reduced Fat Spinach & Garlic	60	3	160	2	4%
✓✓ Président or Trader Joe's Light Brie (1 oz.)	70	3	200	6	10%
Boursin Dairy-Free Garlic & Herbs ●	90	6	170	0	2%
Snacks (1 string, stick, or round, ¾ oz., unless noted)					
✓✓ Kraft Twists 2% Mozzarella & Cheddar	50	1.5	160	6	8%
✓✓ Sargento Light String	45	1.5	160	5	10%
✓✓ Cabot Lite50 White Sharp Cheddar	50	2	160	6	15%
✓✓ Babybel Light	50	2	160	6	10%
✓✓ Kraft 2% Mozzarella String	60	2	180	6	10%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Sharp Cheddar	60	2.5	140	6	15%
✓✓ Babybel Mozzarella	50	2.5	160	6	10%
✓✓ Cracker Barrel 2% Extra Sharp Yellow Sticks	60	2.5	180	5	10%
✓✓ Sargento Reduced Fat Colby-Jack	70	3	120	6	10%
✓✓ Babybel Sharp Original	60	3	140	5	10%
✓✓ Kraft Part-Skim Mozzarella String (1 oz.)	80	3	180	7	10%
BelGioioso Fresh Mozzarella Snacking (1 oz.)	70	3.5	85	5	8%
Miyoko's Cheddar Sticks ●	60	3.5	170	2	6%
Ile de France Brie Bites (0.9 oz.)	70	4	140	4	8%
Babybel Original	70	4	160	5	10%
✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ● Plant-based.					
¹ Average of the entire line or the varieties listed.					
Daily Values (for a 2,000-calorie diet): Saturated Fat: 20 grams.					
Sodium: 2,300 milligrams. Calcium: 1,300 milligrams.					
Daily Protein Target: 85 grams.					
Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.					



FOOD FIND

Pantastic



Never heard of **pattypans**?

The diminutive yellow, white, or green flying saucers are landing in farmers markets right around now.

With their pint size and scalloped edges, these best-tasting of all summer squashes are also the cutest.

To get similar-shaped pieces that cook evenly, cut the squash into wedges or halves. Then what? Start with our Healthy Cook's Pan-Roasted Vegetables over Saucy Beans (see p. 10) or Dish of the Month. The browned flat edges you'll get from sautéing or grilling bring out the pattypans' natural sweetness.

That touch of sweet makes them perfect partners for grains. Pattypans are also right at home with pasta. (Think veggie-rich primavera full of tomatoes, peppers, and broccoli.)

Or go raw. When sliced thinly, the delicate squash shines in salads.

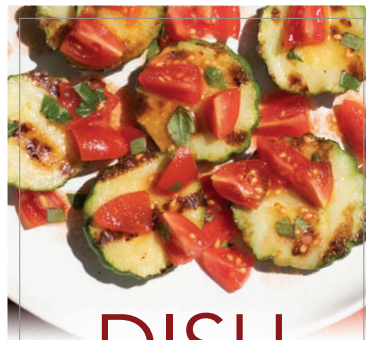
Pump up the flavor by tossing raw slices with fresh-squeezed lemon, extra-virgin olive oil, toasted almonds or pine nuts, and punchy ingredients like baby arugula or radishes. Top with fresh herbs like parsley, basil, and mint.

Like most non-starchy vegetables, pattypans pile on the nutrients (hello fiber, magnesium, vitamin C, and folate) for next-to-no calories (just 30 per cup).

Enjoy pattypans while you can. Before you know it, it'll be fall, and the parade of hearty winter squashes will begin.

Delicatas: you're on deck!

Photos: bendicks/stock.adobe.com (top left), Ben & Jerry's (top right), Kate Sherwood/CSPI (bottom).



DISH of the month

End-of-Summer Squash

Brush 1 lb. halved pattypans with olive oil. Grill or sauté until tender, 3–7 minutes. Toss 1 cup diced tomatoes with 1 Tbs. olive oil, a few leaves minced basil, and 1/8 tsp. salt. Spoon over the pattypans.

FOOD FAIL



Over the Topped

"We wanted to dial up the indulgence level with this unique line of flavors, which entirely challenges HOW you eat this ice cream," said Dena Wimette, the company's Innovation Guru, in a [press release](#) announcing **Ben & Jerry's Topped** ice creams.

Thank goodness! If there's one thing B&J needs, it's dialed-up indulgence. Why stop with ice cream, when you can add "chocolatey" ganache? ("Chocolatey" usually means *not* real chocolate.) B&J wouldn't tell us which of the ingredients on its label—coconut oil, perhaps?—are in the ganache.

The **Thick Mint** ("mint ice cream with chocolate cookie swirls & mint chocolate cookie balls topped with chocolate cookies & chocolatey ganache") squeezes 420 calories into a modest 2/3-cup serving.

Add to that 13 grams of saturated fat and 31 grams (7½ teaspoons) of added sugar—two-thirds of a day's worth of each. It's like eating 10 Girl Scout Thin Mints cookies—nearly a third of a box.

Since each pint holds just three servings, the label also has to list Nutrition Facts for the entire container. Now you're talking 1,250 calories plus nearly two days' worth of sat fat and added sugar. Urp.

Ben & Jerry's already sells a line of ice creams with a **Cookie Dough Core** ("more dough than you ever thought possible") and bags of **Cookie Dough Chunks** (most are largely white flour, sugar, and butter). Clearly, that's not enough.

After all, indulgence knows no end.

benjerry.com—802-846-1500



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