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WELLNESS WEEKLY



Food Frauds & Fixes

Some foods that we think are healthy can be diet wreckers. Listed below are food frauds to look out for:

Food Fraud: Fresh Smoothies

That "healthy" berry blend at a smoothie shop can have a whopping 80 grams of sugar, 350 calories, no protein, and often, no fresh fruit. Fruit "concentrates" are often used instead of fresh fruit. And sorbet, ice cream, and sweeteners can make these no better than a milkshake.

Food Fix: Get the "small" cup. Ask for fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt, milk, or protein powder to blend in good nutrition

Food Fraud: Energy Bars

Many of these are simply enhanced candy bars with more calories (up to 500) and a higher price tag. Their compact size also leaves many people unsatisfied.

Food Fix: Choose bars that have 200 calories or less, at least 5 grams of fiber, and some protein, which helps provide energy when the sugar rush fades.

Food Fraud: Diet Soda

Sugar-free soda may not be an effective "diet" aid after all. Some early studies have linked diet soda to weight gain.

Food Fix: Mix seltzer water with juice for a low-calorie fizzy drink with no artificial sweeteners.

Food Fraud: Enhanced Water

Vitamins are commonly added to bottled water and advertised on the front label. But some brands also add sugar, taking water from zero calories to as much as 125.

Food Fix: Try packets of crystallized lemon to add flavor to water without calories.

Food Fraud: Chicken Burrito

These burritos can have about 1,000 calories and plenty of saturated fat. Cheese, sour cream, and the jumbo flour tortilla all contribute. And when the burrito is as big as your forearm, the serving is just too big.

Food Fix: Share one or try a soft taco with grilled veggies on a corn tortilla with low-calorie salsa.

Food Fraud: 2% Milk

Two percent milk sounds healthier than "whole" milk. But it still has more than half the saturated fat of whole milk.

Food Fix: If you like whole milk, blend it with 2% for a while, then 1%, then skim, until you get used to the taste of nonfat milk.

Food Fraud: Breakfast Muffins

Muffins masquerade as a healthy choice for breakfast, but they're still mainly sugary cakes of refined flour. One store-bought muffin can hit 500 calories.

Food Fix: Go no larger than 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Or look for 100-calorie muffins at the store. They limit calories, and some brands are a surprisingly good source of whole grains and fiber.

Food Fraud: Salty Salad Toppings

Processed artichoke hearts, chickpeas, and olives are just a few of the salt shockers lurking on the salad bar. To avoid an unhealthy amount of sodium, limit anything that comes out of a can.

Food Fix: Radishes, bell peppers, cucumbers, and other fresh vegetables are low in sodium.