NO DUD SPUD

In early 2009, we rated dozens of vegetables, giving each one a score based on how much potassium, vitamin C, vitamin K, folate, iron, calcium, fiber, and lutein and other carotenoids a typical serving contains.

As you’d expect, leafy greens like kale, spinach, collards, and Swiss chard rose to the top. Not far below came pumpkin, then sweet potato. Sweets were rated higher than carrots, higher than broccoli, higher than butternut squash.

That explains why a three-ounce serving of McCain Crinkle Cut Sweet Potato Fries (12 to 15 fries) takes care of 100 percent of your vitamin A, 16 percent of your vitamin C, and 7 percent of your potassium for the entire day for just 120 calories and 180 milligrams of sodium.

But it doesn’t explain how incredibly tasty they are. To see that, you’ll need about 20 minutes and a 425˚ oven (ignore the deep-frying instructions).

McCain’s sweets aren’t the first ones to hit the market. We raved about Ian’s Sweet Potato Fries back in 2002. Alexia Sweet Potato Fries are another fine pick.

Like the others, McCain’s fries contain some added flour and other fillers and binders, so you’re not getting 100 percent sweet potatoes.

But unlike the others, McCain is a mainstream brand. That means it’s probably in your supermarket’s freezer case, right next to the Crinkle Cut or Steak Cut Fries and other nutritional weakling white potatoes.

Sweeeeeet.

McCain: (877) 804-6198

TRANSGRESSION

“Excellent source of ALA Omega 3,” declares the Land O’Lakes Margarine box. Who knew that Land O’Lakes stick margarine was so heart healthy?

It isn’t.

Each tablespoon of the spread has 2½ grams of trans fat (and 2 grams of saturated fat). That’s more than the 2 grams of trans that a panel of scientific experts considered recommending as an entire day’s limit.

These days, most tub margarines have little or no trans. Ditto for some sticks. Earth Balance Vegan Buttery Sticks have zero (though every tablespoon is loaded with 4½ grams of sat fat). Promise and I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter! Cooking & Baking sticks also have no trans, according to their labels (but they probably contain just under ½ gram).

Blue Bonnet and Parkay sticks have 1½ grams of trans per tablespoon. Country Crock, Fleischmann’s, and Imperial have 2 grams. But Land O’Lakes outdoes them both.

It’s bad enough that the company sells one of the worst margarines. It has the chutzpah to pretend that its sticks are good for the heart.

First of all, the body converts less than 10 percent of ALA into DHA or EPA, the two omega-3 fats in fish that may lower the risk of heart disease. And, anyway, the ALA wouldn’t outweigh the harm caused by the margarine’s saturated and trans fat.

The label isn’t false. It’s just misleading. So calling the company Land O’Lies might be too strong. Perhaps.

Land O’Lakes: (800) 328-4155

Steam or grill 1 lb. of asparagus.
Whisk together 2 Tbs. mayonnaise with 1 Tbs. lemon juice, 2 Tbs. Parmesan cheese, and some freshly ground black pepper. Drizzle the dressing over the cooked asparagus. Or try it on cooked broccoli or cauliflower.