What’s Your Diet IQ?
Take our quiz to find out

ADRENAL FATIGUE
Is it real?

Finding the best nut & seed butters

Misleading ads
THE LATEST CROP
STANDING UP FOR HEALTHY KIDS

It’s a little passé to quote Yogi Berra these days, but his wise words continue to ring true. The Trump administration’s effort to roll back seemingly final nutrition standards for school meals “ain’t over till it’s over.”

In 2010, years of advocacy and organizing by activists led by Margo Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action’s publisher, led to passage of the landmark Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

The law, and regulations later set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ushered in a new era for school meals: more fruits and vegetables, less salt, more whole grains, less saturated fat.

Not so fast. In May 2017, in his first week in office, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation–a combined July/August issue—should be in your mailbox by late July.

In 2010, years of advocacy and organizing by activists led by Margo Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action’s publisher, led to passage of the landmark Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

The law, and regulations later set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ushered in a new era for school meals: more fruits and vegetables, less salt, more whole grains, less saturated fat.

Not so fast. In May 2017, in his first week in office, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation.

In 2010, years of advocacy and organizing by activists led by Margo Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action’s publisher, led to passage of the landmark Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act.

The law, and regulations later set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, ushered in a new era for school meals: more fruits and vegetables, less salt, more whole grains, less saturated fat.

Not so fast. In May 2017, in his first week in office, Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue signed a proclamation.

The USDA wants to allow too much salt and too little whole grain in school meals. This past December, the USDA delivered on its pledge. Its final rule eliminated the long-term target for cutting sodium and weakened the goal requiring all breads and other grain foods to be at least 50 percent whole grain.

Clearly, the USDA didn’t take CSPI and the lawyers at Democracy Forward into account.

On April 3, we and Healthy School Food Maryland filed suit charging the USDA with violating the law when it failed to adequately respond to the 99 percent of public comments that opposed the rollbacks. The agency also violated the law by not requiring that school meals follow the USDA’s own Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

If it weren’t so depressing, we could follow Yogi’s admonition to “Take it with a grin of salt.” But grains of salt are nothing to grin about.

On March 5, an expert panel convened by the prestigious National Academy of Medicine reaffirmed the scientific evidence that high-sodium intakes raise blood pressure and the risk of stroke and heart disease.

The panel advised adults to consume no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day—the same level set by a 2005 panel—while lowering limits for most children. The panel called those levels “Chronic Disease Risk Reduction Intakes” because, it said, reducing sodium intake lowers not only blood pressure but also the risk of cardiovascular disease.

So just when the USDA should be protecting children by strengthening limits on excess sodium in school meals, the agency is weakening them.

On the upside, soon after the Academy issued its sodium report came news that the Salt Institute—for over a century a promoter of the salt industry and a vehement denier of the risks of salt—would dissolve at the end of March. As Yogi himself might have said, “The future ain’t what it used to be.”

Peter G. Liburdi, MD, MPH, President Center for Science in the Public Interest
What can lower your risk of memory loss or breast cancer? How can you dodge endocrine disruptors or food poisoning? Can some supplements help curb arthritis pain or prevent cataracts?

There’s no shortage of questions about diet and health, and no shortage of answers—in the press, on social media, or from who knows where. Here’s your chance to see how much of what you’ve heard is true...and how much you remember from past issues of Nutrition Action.

Each question has only one answer. Ready, set, go.

1. Which food is most clearly linked to a higher risk of colorectal cancer?
   a. High-fat dairy
   b. Processed meats
   c. Sugary drinks
   d. Diet drinks
   e. Refined grains

2. Which of these steps is most likely to prevent memory loss?
   a. Taking antioxidants
   b. Taking DHA
   c. Taking ginkgo
   d. Taking a multivitamin
   e. Lowering high blood pressure

3. Which is NOT a sign of a heart attack?
   a. Shortness of breath
   b. Nausea
   c. Sudden dizziness
   d. Sudden arm weakness
   e. Sudden fatigue

4. Which of these is most likely to curb osteoarthritis knee pain?
   a. Vitamin D
   b. 5-Loxin supplements
   c. MSM supplements
   d. Exercise
   e. Arthroscopic surgery

5. Which of these is NOT good advice for grilling meat or poultry?
   a. Marinate before grilling
   b. Flip meat only once
   c. Avoid needle tenderized meat
   d. Trim visible fat before grilling
   e. Don’t char or overcook

6. Which of these is most clearly linked to a lower risk of liver cancer?
   a. Coffee
   b. Fruits & vegetables
   c. Whole grains
   d. Nuts
   e. Low-fat dairy

7. Which has NOT been consistently linked to sugary drinks?
   a. Weight gain
   b. Type 2 diabetes
   c. Heart disease
   d. Parkinson’s disease
   e. High uric acid levels

8. Which is LEAST likely to cause an outbreak of E. coli O157:H7?
   a. Soft cheese
   b. Ground beef
   c. Raw milk
   d. Unpasteurized juice
   e. Raw sprouts

9. Which of these WON’T help you avoid endocrine disruptors like BPA?
   a. Microwave in glass or ceramic containers instead of plastic
   b. Wash plastic by hand or on the top shelf of the dishwasher
   c. Use plastics with recycling No. 7
   d. Get rid of scratched plastic containers
   e. Use fewer canned foods

10. Which is LEAST likely to lower your risk of osteoporosis?
    a. Get enough calcium from food or supplements
    b. Get enough vitamin D
    c. Do weight-bearing exercise on most days
    d. Limit acidic foods
    e. Limit refined grains

11. Which of these steps is NOT likely to lower your risk of breast cancer?
    a. Lose (or don’t gain) excess weight
    b. Exercise daily
    c. Drink alcohol only on occasion
    d. Eat more vegetables
    e. Take antioxidant vitamins

12. Which is most likely to prevent a cold?
    a. Take Airborne
    b. Take vitamin C
    c. Take zinc lozenges
    d. Don’t share food
    e. Don’t rub your eyes

What’s Your Diet IQ?

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Download the quiz to find out
13. Extra pounds are linked to a higher risk of all but one of these cancers. Which has NO link?
   a. Liver
   b. Colorectal
   c. Leukemia
   d. Pancreatic
   e. Uterine

14. All but one of these steps may lower the risk of kidney stones. Which one
   DOESN’T?
   a. Drink enough fluids
   b. Limit sugary drinks
   c. Limit calcium-rich foods
   d. Eat plenty of fruit
   e. Lose (or don’t gain) excess weight

15. Taking which of these is most likely to lower your risk of cataracts?
   a. A multivitamin and mineral
   b. Bilberry
   c. AREDS supplements
   d. Antioxidant vitamins
   e. Taurine

16. Which of these is LEAST likely to help prevent urinary leakage?
   a. Lose (or don’t gain) excess weight
   b. Do Kegel exercises (men, too!) to strengthen pelvic muscles
   c. Get 30 to 60 minutes of exercise on most days
   d. Take AZO bladder control supplements

17. Eating extra protein is most likely to help with which of these?
   a. Feel full
   b. Curb muscle loss if you’re dieting
   c. Lose more weight if you’re dieting
   d. Build muscle
   e. Curb insulin resistance

18. Which of these is most likely to prevent wrinkles?
   a. Adding collagen powder to foods
   b. Using a moisturizer with hyaluronic acid
   c. Using a moisturizer with vitamin C
   d. Taking a vitamin A (retinol) supplement
   e. Using sunscreen year round

19. Which of these has the kind of fat that’s likely to lower your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol?
   a. Croissant
   b. Yogurt-covered raisins
   c. Ranch salad dressing
   d. Buttered popcorn
   e. Cupcakes

20. Death rates from which cancer are rising?
   a. Breast
   b. Colorectal
   c. Liver
   d. Lung
   e. Ovarian

21. Which of these steps DOESN’T lower your risk of food poisoning?
   a. Scrub melons and cucumbers before cutting
   b. Rinse raw poultry
   c. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours
   d. Wash hands with soap and water
   e. Only eat sprouts if they’re cooked

22. Which of these does NOT help prevent chronic kidney disease?
   a. Keep blood sugar under control
   b. Keep a lid on blood pressure
   c. Lose excess weight
   d. Drink less tea
   e. Avoid excess salt

23. Which low-calorie sweetener should you avoid?
   a. Acesulfame potassium
   b. Erythritol
   c. Maltitol
   d. Monk fruit extract
   e. Stevia

24. Which does NOT help you get an accurate blood pressure reading?
   a. Stay silent
   b. Keep your arm at your side and bent at the elbow
   c. Avoid caffeine for ½ to 2 hours beforehand
   d. Keep your feet on the floor
   e. Lean your back against a chair

25. Which of these fish supplies the FEWEST omega-3 fats?
   a. Farmed salmon
   b. Wild salmon
   c. Rainbow trout
   d. Catfish
   e. Albacore tuna

ANSWERS

1. b (Processed meats). A daily serving of bacon, ham, hot dogs, sausage, or most deli meats is linked to an 18 percent higher risk of colorectal cancer, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Studies haven’t found consistent links with other foods or drinks (see Apr. 2019, p. 3).

2. e (Lowering high blood pressure). Though it’s not certain, there’s substantial evidence that keeping a lid on your blood pressure—with diet or, if necessary, drugs—can help prevent memory loss. Ditto for controlling blood sugar. The evidence for supplements is weak (see May 2016, p. 3).

3. d (Sudden arm weakness). Arm weakness could be a sign of a stroke, though, so it might warrant a call to 911. And arm pain could signal a heart attack (see Sept. 2015, p. 3).

4. d (Exercise). Walking plus strength training—with or without weight loss—helps curb arthritis pain. Vitamin D doesn’t work. Surgery is no better than physical therapy. MSM and 5-Loxin are backed by insufficient evidence (see Oct. 2017, p. 3).

5. b (Flip meat only once). Flipping every minute or so cooks meat faster. That should cut heterocyclic amines (which cause cancer in animals). So do marinating (in the fridge) and not overcooking. Tenderizing by piercing beef with needles or blades can push bugs on the surface deep inside, boosting the risk of food poisoning (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 11).

6. a (Uterine). Women who have had a hysterectomy are more likely to die of colorectal cancer (Nov. 2015, p. 6.).

7. d (Lung). The evidence for supplements is weak (see May 2016, p. 3).

8. a (Liver). A random diet study has been the only one to show that are more likely to die of colorectal cancer. The study is dangerous because it’s life-threatening hemolytic uremic syndrome (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 11).

9. c (Parkinson’s disease). Higher uric acid levels can lead to gout. Need any more reasons to cut back on sugar? (See May 2016, p. 3).

10. d (Rinse raw poultry). Flipping every minute or so cooks meat faster. That may reduce the number of salmonella outbreaks, which have a lower risk of liver—and possibly uterine—cancer. Avoiding excess sugar is more reasons to cut back on sugar? (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 11).

11. e (Leukemia). Also linked to excess acid levels can lead to gout. Need any more reasons to cut back on sugar? (see May 2016, p. 3).

12. e (Don’t rub your eyes). Sucking on lollipops, for example, gives pregnant women lower serum levels of zinc and vitamin D. (See May 2016, p. 3.)

13. b (Coffee). People who drink coffee have a lower risk of liver—and possibly uterine—cancer. Avoiding excess sugar is more reasons to cut back on sugar? (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 11).

6. a (Coffee). People who drink coffee have a lower risk of liver—and possibly uterine—cancer. Avoiding excess weight lowers your risk of both (see Apr. 2019, p. 3).

7. d (Parkinson’s disease). Higher uric acid levels can lead to gout. Need any more reasons to cut back on sugar? (See Nov. 2015, p. 6.)

8. a (Soft cheese). Soft cheeses have been linked to Listeria outbreaks, which are most likely to harm pregnant women. E. coli O157:H7 infection is dangerous because it can lead to life-threatening hemolytic uremic syndrome (see Dec. 2017, p. 3).

9. c (Use plastics with recycling No. 7). No. 7 often contains BPA. Also avoid No. 3 (which can contain phthalates) and No. 6 (which contains styrene, a probable carcinogen). Plastics that are scratched or heated to a high temperature are more likely to leach chemicals into food (see Nov. 2017, p. 8).

10. d (Limit acidic foods). Foods that create more acid in the body—not acidic foods—may increase bone loss. The list includes grains (like bread, rice, cereal, and pasta) and protein-rich foods (see Jul./Aug. 2017, p. 3).

11. e (Take antioxidant vitamins). Trials that gave women vitamins E and C and/or beta-carotene found no lower risk of breast cancer. The other steps, while not tested in trials, are linked to a lower risk (see Sept. 2014, p. 3).

12. e (Don’t rub your eyes). Sucking on zinc lozenges might shorten a cold slightly. But not touching your eyes or nose—and washing your hands—helps prevent a cold (see March 2014, p. 11).

13. c (Leukemia). Also linked to excess weight: cancers of the kidney, ovaries, gallbladder, and thyroid; some cancers of the esophagus and stomach; and multiple myeloma (see Apr. 2019, p. 3).

14. c (Limit calcium-rich foods). High-dose calcium supplements (1,000 mg a day or more) may promote kidney stones, but people who eat more calcium-rich foods have a lower risk of stones (see March 2014, p. 3).

15. a (A multivitamin and mineral). The Physicians’ Health Study II reported a 9 percent lower risk of cataracts in men who took Centrum Silver for 11 years. There’s no good evidence that bilberry, taurine, antioxidants (vitamins E and C), or AREDS formula supplements work. AREDS supplements can slow macular degeneration, but only in people with intermediate or advanced disease (see Nov. 2016, p. 3).

16. d (Take AZO bladder control supplements). In one study—funded by a company with a stake in the outcome—women who took AZO for 12 weeks made slightly fewer trips to the bathroom (8 vs. 9½ a day) than those who took a placebo. That’s not enough to go on (see Dec. 2015, p. 9).

17. b (Curb muscle loss if you’re dieting). Getting enough protein can curb muscle loss, but extra protein doesn’t do much in the best studies. Even if you’re dieting, extra protein only curbs muscle loss slightly (see Sept. 2018, p. 3). Want more muscle? Start strength training.

18. e (Using sunscreen year round). Look for a broad spectrum sunscreen (which filters both UVA and UVB rays) with at least SPF 30. Some retinoid creams (like tretinoin) can help smooth wrinkles, but taking vitamin A supplements won’t help. Nor will moisturizers or collagen supplements (see Nov. 2018, p. 8).

19. c (Ranch salad dressing). It looks creamy, but it’s mostly unsaturated oil, which can lower LDL. Cupcakes or croissants are made with shortening or butter, which raise LDL. Ditto for the palm oil in yogurt-covered raisins (see Nov. 2017, p. 3).

20. c (Liver). Researchers blame the jump largely on the obesity epidemic, though hepatitis C infections may account for some of the rise (see Apr. 2019, p. 3).

21. b (Rinse raw poultry). It’s smart to rinse fruits and vegetables, but not raw poultry (or pre-washed packaged greens). Rinsing can spread bacteria to foods, utensils, and kitchen surfaces (see Dec. 2017, p. 3).

22. d (Drink less tea). Tea hasn’t been linked to a higher risk of kidney disease (see Sept. 2016, p. 3).

23. a (Acesulfame potassium). It has been poorly tested, but it increased cancer risk in older animal studies. Monk fruit extract hasn’t been well tested, but is probably safe. Stevia extract, erythritol, and (in moderate doses) maltitol are safe (see Sept. 2017, p. 7).

24. b (Keep your arm at your side and bent at the elbow). Your arm should be supported at heart level by the person taking your pressure or by a table (see Jan./Feb. 2018, p. 7).

25. d (Catfish). Salmon and trout are rich in omega-3s, whether farmed or wild. Albacore tuna beats chunk light (see Jan./Feb. 2019, p. 3).

How’d you do?
We told you it was tough.

21-25 Impressive! Even we had to double-check some answers.

14-20 Excellent. Definitely refrigeratoor-door material.

6-13 Keep at it. With so much misinformation out there, it’s hard to keep anything straight these days.

0-5 Umm... Don’t toss that renewal notice.
Get Your Insulin Going

Once your cells become insensitive to insulin, your risk of type 2 diabetes climbs. Can exercise help?

Danish researchers randomly assigned 188 sedentary overweight or obese people to:

- **BIKE:** start biking to work,
- **MOD:** do aerobic exercise (walking, running, rowing, cycling, or cross-training) at a moderate pace,
- **VIG:** do the same aerobic exercise at a vigorous pace,
- **CON:** continue their sedentary lifestyle.

Each exercise group aimed to burn 320 calories a day (women) or 420 calories a day (men) on five days each week for six months.

Compared to the CON group, insulin sensitivity improved 26 percent in the VIG and 20 percent in the BIKE group but only 17 percent in the MOD group, which fell below the 20 percent target. Bonus: All exercise groups lost belly fat.

**What to do:** Don’t like to bike? Walk, run, row, spin, swim, whatever.


No Breakfast? No Problem.

Does skipping breakfast make you pack on pounds because you overeat at lunch?

Scientists looked at 13 trials that randomly assigned adults to either eat or skip breakfast for one day to 16 weeks. The results: breakfast skippers ate 260 fewer calories per day.

**What to do:** Don’t worry that skipping breakfast leads to weight gain.

*BMJ* 2019. doi:10.1136/bmj.j42.

Vitamin D & Cancer

Many people with GI cancers are low in vitamin D. Could taking more help?

In the AMATERASU trial, scientists randomly assigned 417 patients with mostly colorectal, stomach, or esophageal cancer to take vitamin D (2,000 IU a day) or a placebo. Over five years, it took no longer for the vitamin D takers than the placebo takers to relapse or die.

In the SUNSHINE trial, scientists randomly assigned 139 people being treated with chemotherapy for advanced or metastatic colorectal cancer to take a high dose of vitamin D (8,000 IU a day for two weeks, then 4,000 IU a day) or a standard dose (400 IU a day). The high-dose group fared no better than the standard-dose group.

After the researchers adjusted for age, sex, race, weight, metastatic sites, and other factors that could affect cancer progression, the high-dose group did better, but that result needs to be confirmed in a larger trial.

**What to do:** Take vitamin D if your levels are low, but don’t rely on it to help treat GI cancer.


Scared of Omega-6s?

“Avoid vegetable oils high in omega-6,” says healthline.com. (That includes soybean, corn, and some safflower oils.)

**Avoid?**

Researchers pooled results from 30 studies that tracked roughly 69,000 people for 3 to 32 years. Those with the highest blood levels of linoleic acid, a key omega-6 fat, had a 23 percent lower risk of dying of cardiovascular disease than those with the lowest levels. Blood levels of arachidonic acid—an omega-6 fat that is often vilified—weren’t linked to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

**What to do:** Don’t fear omega-6 fats. This study (partly funded by mayo and margarine maker Unilever) isn’t definitive, but other evidence backs up advice to replace saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats rich in either omega-3s or omega-6s.

*Circulation* 2019. doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.118.038908.
Two-thirds of smokers want to quit, and about half try each year. Fewer than one in 10 succeed, despite the fact that the FDA has approved both prescription and over-the-counter drugs that could help.

Enter supplement sellers trying to make a fast buck on Amazon. Some have even earned coveted “Amazon’s Choice” awards.

We asked 15 companies for evidence that smokers who take their supplements are more likely to quit. None provided anything even remotely credible. Here are a few examples.

**What Evidence?**

“Quit smoking safely and naturally,” boasts Eliminiction (6 botanicals, 1 vitamin). “No need for nicotine gum.”

The evidence? “Eliminiction has helped many, many people give up smoking for good, but there are no scientific studies that show the likeliness of success,” conceded its manufacturer.

“Nicoban will help you break free from nicotine addiction the natural way,” promises the supplement’s website (24 botanicals, 7 oils, ox bile powder).

Got any scientific study showing that it helps? “No,” admitted the manufacturer. But “we estimate that Nicoban works about 75% of the time.” Hmmm...

**Amazon’s Choice?**

Think you can trust claims on “Amazon’s Choice” items?

Clear Airways (9 vitamins, 2 minerals, 12 botanicals, 5 other ingredients) told us that “a Doctor” wrote “white papers” about studies showing that the supplement works, but wouldn’t tell us which studies.

“Results do vary,” said the company. “One needs to also be willing & take an initiative to cut back on smoking, exercise regularly, eat healthy & drink a lot of water with lemons.”

Quit Nutrition (13 vitamins, 9 minerals, 8 botanicals, 2 other ingredients) cited a four-day study of one of its 32 ingredients...that didn’t test quitting smoking.

**Lobelia Loophole**

EZ Quit (2 botanicals, 1 other ingredient) and Vice Breaker (4 botanicals) credited the herbal ingredient lobelia for their supplements’ effectiveness.

Lucky for them that supplement companies don’t have to honor the FDA’s ban of lobelia from over-the-counter anti-smoking drugs, gums, and lozenges.

There’s no credible evidence that lobelia helps people quit smoking. We asked EZ Quit’s manufacturer for studies showing otherwise, but got...EZ Zip.

**Unqualified?**

“Quit smoking the all natural way,” claims NicRx (11 botanicals).

And that’s based on? “Unfortunately, we are not qualified to advise customers about medical studies,” said NicRx’s Amazon seller. Qualified to take their cash? You bet.

“Why should we believe that? “It will help leveled [sic] Nicotine in your body,” was all the company (through its Amazon seller) could muster.

**Watch out, Granny**

Grandma’s Herbs Kick It (14 botanicals) advertises on Amazon that it not only helps “in overcoming Smoking Addiction” but also “aids in overcoming drug addiction.”

Oops. That illegal claim could land Grandma in hot water. The FDA has zero tolerance for supplements that make bogus claims about curing drug addiction.

Grandma didn’t respond to two inquiries via Amazon. An email sent through her website bounced back.
Tired? Overweight? Anxious? Depressed? Health gurus and celebrity doctors are eager to diagnose—and cure!—whatever ails you. Here’s what the science says about the latest ideas buzzing around the wellness world.

ADRENAL FATIGUE

Claim: “When your adrenal glands are overtaxed, a condition known as adrenal fatigue or adrenal exhaustion sets in, which in turn can set a cascade of disease processes into motion,” claims Joseph Mercola on his website, mercola.com.

Evidence: “The theory of adrenal fatigue—which was coined by endocrinologist James Wilson in the late ’90s—is that overexertion of the adrenal glands as they continuously pump out the stress hormone cortisol eventually leads the adrenals to burn out, resulting in an inability to respond to stress,” explains Rashmi Mullur, an endocrinologist and assistant professor of medicine at UCLA.

Adrenal fatigue affects up to 80 percent of American adults at some point during their lifetime, says Wilson’s book, Adrenal Fatigue: The 21st Century Stress Syndrome. It’s responsible for salty and sweet cravings, being tired for no reason, and more, he claims.

Only one problem, notes Mullur: “No matter how much stress we’re under, our adrenal glands won’t burn out.”

The pituitary (a pea-sized gland in the brain) tells the adrenal glands to produce cortisol. In turn, “cortisol acts as a messenger from the adrenals, and tells the pituitary, ‘We’re good. We’ve made enough hormone. You don’t need to stimulate us any more,’” Mullur explains. “It’s a self-regulating system.”

The processes that control cortisol production can break down, for example in people who have Addison’s disease (when the adrenals don’t make enough cortisol) or Cushing’s disease (when they make too much).

“But I can test for those diseases, and it’s a very clear ‘Yes, you have this’ or ‘No, you don’t,’” says Mullur.

So why do some people feel so exhausted? Other problems—like thyroid disease, depression, sleep apnea, past trauma, and more, he claims. Stress Syndrome. It’s a hormonal pathway that just doesn’t regulate, because it’s not an adrenal issue,” he notes.

Those ingredients could influence hormonal pathways in unpredictable ways, Mullur points out. What’s more, they could interfere with hormone tests, making it harder for your doctor to diagnose problems.

Bottom Line: “The term adrenal fatigue doesn’t capture what people are experiencing, because it’s not an adrenal issue,” says Mullur. “But the burnout and exhaustion are absolutely real. If we doctors dig a little deeper to get to the root cause of those issues, we’re more likely to help patients.”

LEAKY GUT SYNDROME

 Claim: “Leaky gut syndrome is a condition where undigested proteins like gluten, toxins and microbes can pass into the bloodstream,” cautions chiropractor Joseph Mercola on his website, draxe.com.

“There’s a process that controls everything from your stomach to your brain, tightness in your blood vessels, your immune system, and past trauma.”

That process is a self-regulating system that one cannot control, and many factors can upset it. Lack of sleep, toxins and microbes can pass into the bloodstream, disrupting the self-regulating system that doesn’t know how to manage these invaders.

“The lining of your gut is a single layer of cells that sits between you and the environment,” Fasano explains. “In the small intestine, there are billions of doors in the small intestine, and those doors have tight junctions—between neighboring cells,” Fasano points out. “Depending on how long they’re open, you can have an increase in gut permeability.”

“Over time, if leaky gut is not healed, it can lead to food sensitivities, arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, skin issues like eczema, hypothyroidism, adrenal fatigue, depression, anxiety, ADHD, nutrient malabsorption and autoimmune disease.”

Evidence: “Alternative medicine has embraced the concept of leaky gut syndrome,” says Alessio Fasano, director of the Center for Celiac Research and Treatment at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children.

In contrast, “modern medicine disregards leaky gut syndrome as voodoo medicine because of claims that it causes so many problems when there is no evidence,” he notes.

“In my opinion, both camps are wrong.”

The lining of your gut is a single layer of cells that sits between you and the environment. Conditions that may cause leaky gut include autoimmune or inflammatory diseases, blame it for so many problems when there is no evidence, he notes.

As for supplements that provide “adrenal support,” don’t bother, says Mullur. When researchers bought a dozen popular ones online, they found thyroid hormone in all 12 and at least one steroid hormone in seven. None of the hormones—it’s illegal for them to be in supplements—were listed on the labels.

Those ingredients could influence hormonal pathways in unpredictable ways, Mullur points out. What’s more, they could interfere with hormone tests, making it harder for your doctor to diagnose problems.

Bottom Line: “The term adrenal fatigue doesn’t capture what people are experiencing, because it’s not an adrenal issue,” says Mullur. “But the burnout and exhaustion are absolutely real. If we doctors dig a little deeper to get to the root cause of those issues, we’re more likely to help patients.”

BUZZWORDS

Real remedies...or really good marketing?

BY CAITLIN DOW

Illustration: 3lian.com/all-free-download.com.
Fasano’s “holy grail”: figuring out who those people are early in life and preventing gut permeability in an effort to ward off autoimmune disease. But we’re nowhere near being able to do that yet.

Is there any evidence that supplements, probiotics, or Josh Axe’s Eat Dirt diet can heal a leaky gut?

“Of course not,” says Fasano. “How can you claim that these remedies can fix a problem if you don’t even know if someone has it?”

**Bottom Line:** Don’t waste your time on diets or pills that claim to fix leaky gut.

**BOOST METABOLISM**

**Claim:** “The beauty of your metabolism is that it can be manipulated,” writes self-proclaimed “metabolism whisperer” Haylie Pomroy in her book *The Fast Metabolism Diet*, which claims to “set your metabolism on fire.”

**Evidence:** “When we talk about metabolism, we’re talking about the calories you burn when you’re not doing anything, or your resting metabolism,” says Michael Jensen, director of the Obesity Specialty Council at the Mayo Clinic.

“Unfortunately, we don’t have much control over our resting metabolism.”

For example, it slows as you age.

“If you compare a 70-year-old and a 20-year-old with the same amount of fat and lean tissue, the 70-year-old would burn fewer calories at rest than the 20-year-old,” says Jensen.

Women also have a slower metabolism than men, largely because they typically have less muscle. (You have to burn more calories to maintain muscle than fat.)

Even if men didn’t have more muscle, says Jensen, “for any given amount of fat and lean tissue, women burn slightly fewer calories at rest than men.”

**Bottom Line:** Ignore the hype about resetting or revving your resting metabolism.

“People who gain a lot of extra muscle will burn more calories at rest than before they gained all that muscle,” says Jensen. “But the effect isn’t huge.

“For the average person, muscle accounts for about 25 percent of metabolic rate,” notes Jensen. “So you’d have to gain a lot of muscle before it would have much impact on your resting metabolism.”

Want a bigger calorie-burning boost? Spend less time at rest.

“You’ll burn more calories from doing that strength training than you’ll burn from the increased muscle mass,” says Jensen. Or walk, run, bike, or do other aerobic exercise to burn more calories.

And if your resting metabolism is slow, don’t despair.

Jensen’s team tracked people with either high or low metabolic rates. Those in the “high” group burned about 500 calories more per day than those in the “low” group, despite being roughly the same age and having similar amounts of fat and muscle mass. Yet after roughly ten years, weight gain was no different.

“A low metabolic rate doesn’t mean you’re doomed to gain weight,” says Jensen, “and a high metabolic rate doesn’t protect you from gaining weight.”

**Bottom Line:** Ignore the hype about resetting or revving your resting metabolism. Instead, get moving.

---

Ad Nauseam
BY LINDSAY MOYER & BONNIE LIEBMAN

What’ll they think of next? Madison Avenue execs are happy to run up their billable hours dreaming up new shhticks to make their clients’ products look good.

And if some of those marketing ploys mislead people or encourage them to overeat? Hey! That’s business!

Here’s the latest crop.

Much Ado About...Not Much

“Brewed with no corn syrup,” says the Bud Light ad, which ran during the Super Bowl.

The ad follows a medieval Bud Light brewer as he and his crew schlep a misdelivered barrel of corn syrup first to the Miller Lite castle (“We received our shipment this morning”), then to the Coors Light castle (“Looks like the corn syrup has come home to be brewed!”).

Yes, Miller and Coors use corn syrup, but it gets fermented. So a 12 oz. can of Coors ends up with an insignificant 1 gram of sugar. Miller and Bud lights have none. And corn syrup is no worse than any added sweetener. Talk about a non-issue. In March, MillerCoors sued Anheuser-Busch over the ad.

Here’s the real problem: With 70 percent of U.S. adults overweight or obese, both industry giants should start labeling calories on all their beers, not just the lights. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action’s publisher, has written to them and to the Treasury Department to press for “Alcohol Facts” labels.

Half Caked

“Cut the sugar calories in half and keep the whole cake,” says the ad for Stevia In The Raw.

So if you use stevia to replace half the sugar, you can cut enough calories to eat the whole cake? Sure sounds that way.

But stevia only cuts the sugar’s calories—not the cake’s calories—roughly in half. Made with stevia, the cake has 430 calories per slice (a twelfth of the cake), claims the company’s website. Made without stevia, it would have about 510 calories per slice.

So why show that half cake?

“Reduce sugar, calories and confusion from your recipes by swapping out half the sugar for Stevia In The Raw,” says the ad.

So much for reducing confusion.

Eat Up!

“Erin imagined a world with unlimited pizzabilities,” says the ad for the drug Nexium. “Can you?”

“Just one pill a day offers all-day, all-night protection from frequent heartburn.”

That’s right. Overeat to your heart’s content, then just pop a pill to tamp down your stomach acid. Voilà! No heartburn!

Never mind that people with excess weight are more likely to suffer from acid reflux.

That Nexium. So concerned about the public’s health.
“Brewed with no corn syrup,” says the Bud Light ad, which ran during the Super Bowl. The ad follows a medieval Bud Light brewer as he and his crew schlep a misdelivered barrel of corn syrup first to the Miller Lite castle (“We received our shipment this morning”), then to the Coors Light castle (“Looks like the corn syrup has come home to be brewed!”). Yes, Miller and Coors use corn syrup, but it gets fermented. So a 12 oz. can of Coors ends up with an insignificant 1 gram of sugar. Miller and Bud lights have none. And corn syrup is no worse than any added sweetener. Talk about a non-issue. In March, MillerCoors sued Anheuser-Busch over the ad.

Here’s the real problem: With 70 percent of U.S. adults overweight or obese, both industry giants should start labeling calories on all their beers, not just the lights. The Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action’s publisher, has written to them and to the Treasury Department to press for “Alcohol Facts” labels.

Much Ado About...Not Much

“What with that much protein is this still a snack?” asks the American Quality Pistachios ad. Wow. Just how much protein are we talking about? You’d think the ad would say. In fact, an ounce of pistachios has 6 grams of protein—not a trivial amount, but pretty average for nuts and seeds. Pumpkin seeds (9 grams) and peanuts (7 grams) have more, almonds and sunflower seeds have the same amount, and walnuts (4 grams) and pecans (3 grams) have less.

Don’t get us wrong. Nuts rock. But protein-wise, they pale next to, say, plain greek yogurt or extra-firm tofu. Each has about 15 grams of protein in 5 ounces...and fewer calories. Guess it’s easier to exaggerate when you hide the numbers.

Protein Puffery

“With that much protein is this still a snack?” asks the ad. Wow. Just how much protein are we talking about? You’d think the ad would say. In fact, an ounce of pistachios has 6 grams of protein—not a trivial amount, but pretty average for nuts and seeds.

Pumpkin seeds (9 grams) and peanuts (7 grams) have more, almonds and sunflower seeds have the same amount, and walnuts (4 grams) and pecans (3 grams) have less.

Don’t get us wrong. Nuts rock. But protein-wise, they pale next to, say, plain greek yogurt or extra-firm tofu. Each has about 15 grams of protein in 5 ounces...and fewer calories.

Guess it’s easier to exaggerate when you hide the numbers.

It’s Complicated

“2 eggs made fresh in seconds,” says the ad for Jimmy Dean Sausage Simple Scrambles.

Jimmy blends his eggs with sausage (pork plus water, potassium lactate, caramel color, sodium phosphate and diacetate, beef fat, and a touch of MSG in the “seasoning”) and “pasteurized process colored cheddar cheese” (cheese, water, cream, sodium phosphate, salt, vegetable color, powdered cellulose, and the preservatives sorbic acid, potassium sorbate, and natamycin). Simple? Fresh? Not so much.

Churn that Sugar & Oil!

“Keep calm. It’s triple churned and 2X richer than milk,” gushes the ad for Caramel Latte Coffeemate coffee creamer.

Triple churned? Since when do they even single-churn mixtures of water, sugar, oil, casein, natural and artificial flavor, mono- and diglycerides, dipotassium phosphate, salt, cellulose gel, cellulose gum, and carrageenan?

And yes, each tablespoon has more fat (1½ grams) than you’d get in a tablespoon of whole milk (½ gram). But so does half-and-half or just about any creamer.

Surely, Coffeemate isn’t trying to cash in on the cream-is-back craze? Nah.

Un-Juice

“Little choices make a big difference,” says the ad for Naked Strawberry Banana, as a woman parks far from a store and checks her Fitbit to see her step count.

“Like nutritious fruit smoothies,” the ad continues, as the woman takes a long swig.

Let’s hope that woman didn’t think she was burning up those smoothie calories in her 30-second parking lot trek. That wouldn’t make a dent in the 250 calories she’d get by downsing the 15.2 oz. bottle.

What’s more, liquid calories don’t curb your appetite as well as solid calories. And along with the featured strawberry and banana purée, Naked adds apple and orange juice.

Want a naked snack? Dump the juice. Eat the fruit.
The Healthy Cook

Best Dressed

A punchy dressing turns crisp lettuce, crunchy veggies, and juicy chicken into a feast.

Tahini Lemon Dressing

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ cup tahini
¼ cup fresh lemon juice
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 tsp. kosher salt

Whisk ingredients with 2 Tbs. water until smooth and glossy.

MAKES 15 TBS.

FOR ONE SERVING OF SALAD

2 cups salad greens or cold steamed spinach or other greens
1 cup shredded cabbage or kale
1 cup raw or cooked veggies
4 oz. cooked chicken, tofu, or shrimp
a few leaves of mint, basil, and/or cilantro
3 Tbs. Tahini Lemon Dressing

For a dazzling peanut dressing recipe and more, go to nutritionaction.com/peanutdressing.

Have questions or suggestions? Write to Kate Sherwood at healthycook@cspinet.org.
Nut vs. Nut
Almost any nut can be turned into a butter. The three most popular:

- **Peanut butter.** Our tasters’ favorite, hands down. Bonus: It’s cheap.
- **Almond butter.** Almonds’ sweet taste may not please peanut butter devotees, and a jar usually costs twice as much. But you do get slightly more fiber, magnesium, and vitamin E, plus 8 percent of a day’s calcium (PB has 2 percent).
- **Cashew butter.** Pricey cashews have less polyunsaturated—and more saturated—fat than most other nuts. Another downside: cashew butter has roughly half the protein (4 grams in 2 Tbs.) of almond or peanut butter.

Spreads run the gamut from nothin’ but nuts to dessert. Here’s what to look for in a serving (two level tablespoons):

- **Added sugars:** No more than 3 grams. That’s the limit for our Honorable Mentions. Our Best Bites have no added sugar. Roasted nuts plus a pinch of salt equals great taste.
- **Saturated fat:** No more than 3 grams. That much (or less) is all you get in most butters made only of nuts, seeds, peas, or soy. A 3-gram limit also lets in some “no stir” types that add a touch of solid (more saturated) fat—often palm oil—to stop their natural oils from separating.

Sadly, palm oil plantations often destroy rainforests and wildlife. And although many labels tout “sustainable” palm oil, those standards may not go far enough, say some environmental groups. Solution: look for no palm oil.

- **Protein:** At least 6 grams. You get roughly 6 to 8 grams in most almond and peanut butters. But some spreads add enough sugar and oil to displace some of their nuts, which cuts the protein to 5 to 7 grams. (Macadamia and cashew butters typically start with just 2 to 4 grams. If you want some plant protein from your schmear, they’re not the best.)

We didn’t set criteria for:

- **Calories.** Nut butters get their roughly 200 calories largely from healthy fats. (Tip: Butters may not be as filling as crunching on whole nuts.)
- **Sodium.** Few top 150 mg. Watching every milligram? Many nut butters have less...or none.

Photo: Neko/Corbis; Jennifer Urban/CSP (Smucker’s), Whole Foods Market/365 Almond Butter; Source for graph: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference.

What to Look For
Spreads run the gamut from nothin’ but nuts to dessert. Here’s what to look for in a serving (two level tablespoons):

- **Added sugars:** No more than 3 grams. That’s the limit for our Honorable Mentions. Our Best Bites have no added sugar. Roasted nuts plus a pinch of salt equals great taste.
- **Saturated fat:** No more than 3 grams. That much (or less) is all you get in most butters made only of nuts, seeds, peas, or soy. A 3-gram limit also lets in some “no stir” types that add a touch of solid (more saturated) fat—often palm oil—to stop their natural oils from separating.

Sadly, palm oil plantations often destroy rainforests and wildlife. And although many labels tout “sustainable” palm oil, those standards may not go far enough, say some environmental groups. Solution: look for no palm oil.

- **Protein:** At least 6 grams. You get roughly 6 to 8 grams in most almond and peanut butters. But some spreads add enough sugar and oil to displace some of their nuts, which cuts the protein to 5 to 7 grams. (Macadamia and cashew butters typically start with just 2 to 4 grams. If you want some plant protein from your schmear, they’re not the best.)

We didn’t set criteria for:

- **Calories.** Nut butters get their roughly 200 calories largely from healthy fats. (Tip: Butters may not be as filling as crunching on whole nuts.)
- **Sodium.** Few top 150 mg. Watching every milligram? Many nut butters have less...or none.
Nut butter should be simple. But brands add (or subtract) whatever sells. Some claims—which can appear on better or worse butters—that you can ignore:

- **Protein.** Two tablespoons of plain, unadulterated peanut butter have 8 grams of protein.
- **Collagen.** Wild Friends calls its nut butter “the yummiest way to get your collagen.” But $10 for a jar of peanut butter—or $14 for a jar of almond butter—when there’s no good evidence that eating collagen will improve your skin? (See Nov 2018, p. 8.) You gotta be nuts!
- **Omega-3.** Jif Omega-3 adds just 32 milligrams of EPA+DHA omega-3s from fish oil—what you’d get in roughly ½s ounce of salmon.
- **Keto.** “Keto friendly” FBOMB (think “fat bomb”) Nut Butters feature macadamias, so they wind up lower in protein and higher in saturated fat.
- **Reduced fat.** Most powders are fine, but spreads didn’t get Best Bites or Honorable Mentions if sugars or starches like corn syrup solids replaced some healthy nut fat.
- **Natural.** Many regular nut butters use fully hydrogenated oils (which are saturated—not trans—fats) and (safe) mono- & diglycerides to keep their natural oils from separating. But some “natural” nut butters simply replace those ingredients with sat fat from palm oil.

So why bother with more expensive RX “nut & protein spread” (“9 grams of protein”), with its one egg white per serving? But kudos to RX for adding dates instead of sugar.

- **Collagen.** Wild Friends calls its nut butter “the yummiest way to get your collagen.” But $10 for a jar of peanut butter—or $14 for a jar of almond butter—when there’s no good evidence that eating collagen will improve your skin? (See Nov 2018, p. 8.) You gotta be nuts!
- **Omega-3.** Jif Omega-3 adds just 32 milligrams of EPA+DHA omega-3s from fish oil—what you’d get in roughly ½s ounce of salmon.
- **Keto.** “Keto friendly” FBOMB (think “fat bomb”) Nut Butters feature macadamias, so they wind up lower in protein and higher in saturated fat.
- **Reduced fat.** Most powders are fine, but spreads didn’t get Best Bites or Honorable Mentions if sugars or starches like corn syrup solids replaced some healthy nut fat.
- **Natural.** Many regular nut butters use fully hydrogenated oils (which are saturated—not trans—fats) and (safe) mono- & diglycerides to keep their natural oils from separating. But some “natural” nut butters simply replace those ingredients with sat fat from palm oil.

**No Nuts**

Can’t eat nuts? Your options:

- **Sunflower.** Of all the no-nut butters, Honorable Mentions SunButter Natural and Trader Joe’s sunflower seed butters won over our tasters. The only ingredients: sunflower seeds, sugar, and salt.

  SunButter Natural Sunflower Butter is “processed in a facility free from the top 8 allergens.” That means no peanuts or tree nuts. Trader Joe’s is also processed in a facility free of nuts, the company told us.

  Bonus: Sunflower seed butter delivers more folate, magnesium, zinc, and vitamin E than peanut butter.

- **Soy and Pea.** Wowbutter blends its toasted soybeans with oil, sugar, and salt. The Sneaky Chef uses golden peas. But flavor-wise, we weren’t, um, nuts about them.

- **Impostors**

  Some sweet spreads look like nut butter, yet they have more sugar than nuts—or no nuts, period.

  - **Nutella, etc.** “Nutella hazelnut spread is a happy start to your day!” proclaims the jar. “Enjoy it with whole grain toast, pancakes, strawberries, bananas, and many other foods.” Not so fast. Nutella calls itself a “hazelnut spread with cocoa.” But a “sugar spread with palm oil” would be more honest. Nutella—which, we estimate, has just 4 or 5 nuts in each serving—squeezes in more calories, saturated fat, and sugar than Betty Crocker Rich & Creamy Milk Chocolate Frosting. Cupcakes for breakfast, anyone?

  Trader Joe’s Cocoa Almond Spread isn’t much better. There’s more sugar (about a third of a day’s max) and oil than almonds or cocoa.

  - **Cookie butter.** Lotus Biscoff Cookie Butter is crushed refined-flour cookies plus sugar and oil. Despite Biscoff’s peanut-butter hue, it has no nuts—and little to none of their protein, fiber, magnesium, or other nutrients.

    And the sneaky one-tablespoon serving listed on Trader Joe’s Speculoos Cookie Butter makes it look like it has half the calories of real nut butter (90 vs. 190). In fact, tablespoon for tablespoon, calories are no lower.

    Want a sweet nut butter? Some better bets:

    - **Chocolate.** Most went beyond our 3-gram-added-sugar limit. The two best tasting: Justin’s Chocolate Hazelnut & Almond Butter (8 grams of added sugar) delivers Nutella-like taste with more nuts than sugar and oil. Yummy Peanut Butter & Co Dark Chocolatey Dreams (6 grams) is less than half the price of Justin’s.

    - **Vanilla.** Look for Honorable Mention Simply Balanced Creamy Vanilla Almond Butter (2 grams) at Target.

- **Spreading Out**

  Tahini isn’t for spreading on your sandwich. But the paste—made of just toasted sesame seeds and (sometimes) salt—is the perfect base for salad dressings, sauces, and more.

  Most brands taste similar.

  We liked Whole Foods 365 Organic because it’s easy to shake up and unlikely to separate. Store it in the fridge.

  For a great tahini-based salad dressing, see p. 12. And while you’re at it, try peanut butter in peanut curry, sesame noodles, or peanut dressing.
That’s Nuts!

Best Bites (✔✔) have no added sugars, no more than 3 grams of saturated fat, and at least 6 grams of protein in two tablespoons. They also don’t replace nuts or seeds with starches or sugars. Honorable Mentions (✔) have the same criteria, but can have up to 3 grams of added sugars. Unflavored butters are ranked from least to most saturated fat, then added sugars, then most to least protein. Flavored butters are ranked from least to most added sugars, then sat fat, then most to least protein.

Peanut Butter (2 Tbs.)

- ✔✔ MaraNatha Organic—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔✔ Smucker’s Organic—Creamy or Chunky
- ✔✔ Trader Joe’s Organic Salted Valencia
- ✔ Wild Friends Classic Creamy
- ✔ Trader Joe’s Stir, Creamy Salted
- ✔ 365 (Whole Foods)—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Any brand, unsalted and unsweetened
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Old Fashioned
- ✔ Earth Balance Crunchy
- ✔ Smucker’s Natural—Creamy or Chunky
- ✔ 365 (Whole Foods) Organic Crunchy
- ✔ Earth Balance Creamy
- ✔ MaraNatha or Trader Joe’s—No Stir
- ✔ Peter Pan—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Crunch Time
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Smooth Operator
- ✔ Smart Balance Peanut Butter & Oil Blend
- ✔ Skippy—Creamy or Super Chunk
- ✔ RX
- ✔ Justin’s Classic
- ✔ 365 (Whole Foods) Organic Creamy
- ✔ Earth Balance Peanut & Coconut
- ✔ Simply Jif
- ✔ Peter Pan Natural—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Jif—Creamy, Natural, or Omega-3
- ✔ Skippy Natural Creamy
- ✔ Skippy Natural ½ Less Sodium & Sugar
- ✔ Crazy Richard’s 100% Pure! Powder
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Pure Peanut Powder
- ✔ PB2 Powdered
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Original Powder
- ✔ Better’n Peanut Butter Original
- ✔ Peter Pan Whipped
- ✔ Jif Reduced Fat

Powdered or Reduced-Fat Peanut Butter (2 Tbs.)

- ✔✔ Crazy Richard’s 100% Pure! Powder
- ✔✔ Peanut Butter & Co Pure Peanut Powder
- ✔ PB2 Powdered
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Original Powder
- ✔ Better’n Peanut Butter Original
- ✔ Peter Pan Whipped
- ✔ Jif Reduced Fat

Almond Butter (2 Tbs.)

- ✔✔ Any brand, unsalted and unsweetened
- ✔ Trader Joe’s Salted—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Wild Friends Classic Creamy
- ✔ RX
- ✔ MaraNatha No Stir—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Jif Natural Creamy

Cashew or Macadamia Butter (2 Tbs.)

- 365 (Whole Foods) Creamy Cashew
- Trader Joe’s Creamy Salted Cashew
- Justin’s Classic Cashew
- FBOMB Macadamia with Coconut

Soy, Pea, & Seed Butters (2 Tbs.)

- ✔ Sneaky Chef No-Nut Creamy
- ✔ SunButter No Sugar Added
- ✔ SunButter Organic
- ✔ Wild Friends Organic Honey Sunflower
- ✔ SunButter—Creamy or Natural
- ✔ Trader Joe’s Sunflower Seed
- ✔ Tahini, any brand
- ✔ Wowbutter—Creamy or Crunchy

Flavored Peanut Butter (2 Tbs.)

- ✔ RX Honey Cinnamon
- ✔ Earth Balance Cran Seed Crunch
- ✔ MaraNatha Banana
- ✔ Earth Balance Coffee Chocolate Crunch
- ✔ Skippy Roasted Honey Nut
- ✔ Smucker’s Natural with Honey
- ✔ Jif Natural Honey—Creamy or Crunchy
- ✔ Peanut Butter & Co Dark Chocolate Dreams
- ✔ Reese’s Spreads Chocolate

Flavored Almond, Hazelnut, & Other Butters (2 Tbs.)

- ✔ RX Vanilla Almond
- ✔ RX Maple Almond
- ✔ Wild Friends Collagen—Almond or Peanut
- ✔ PBOMB Salted Chocolate Macadamia
- ✔ MaraNatha Raw Maple Almond
- ✔ Simply Balanced (Target) Creamy Vanilla Almond
- ✔ Justin’s Cinnamon Almond
- ✔ Justin’s Honey Almond
- ✔ Wild Friends Chocolate Almond
- ✔ Justin’s Chocolate Hazelnut & Almond
- ✔ Soom Chocolate Sweet Tahini
- ✔ Trader Joe’s Cocoa Almond Spread
- ✔ Nutella

Cookie Butters (2 Tbs.)

- ✔ Trader Joe’s Speculoos
- ✔ Lotus Biscoff

Best Bite. ✔ Honorable Mention. 1 Average of the entire line or of the varieties listed. 2 Contains at least 150 milligrams of sodium. 3 Some added-sugars numbers are estimates. Daily Values (DV): Saturated Fat: 20 grams. Added Sugars: 50 grams. Sodium: 2,300 mg. Protein Daily Target: 58 grams. Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.
Nothing says summer like stone fruits—named for their hard pit—like peaches, plums, and nectarines.

But one member of the group—fresh apricots—often gets lost in the crowd. And that’s a shame, because it’s hard to beat their delicate flavor, slightly tart skin, and sweet interior. If the apricots at your supermarket don’t wow you, look for some perfectly ripe, sweet samples at your local farmers’ market through July.

Treat apricots like avocados: buy them when they yield slightly to the touch, let them soften in a brown paper bag on the counter, and, when ripe, store them in the fridge for three to five days.

These juicy little orbs supply more than pleasure. Expect a good dose of fiber, potassium, and vitamins A, C, and E...all for just 70 calories in an official four-apricot serving.

Not content to just slice or nibble your fruit straight off the pit? Try adding slices to yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal. Or stir them into a hearty Moroccan chicken stew.

Apricots also add a delightful surprise to grain or green salads, like this one from our Healthy Cook, Kate Sherwood:

**Top 4 cups salad greens with 2 sliced apricots, half a sliced avocado, and 2 Tbs. sunflower seeds. Whisk together 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar, and ¼ tsp. salt with a grind of black pepper. Drizzle over the salad. Serves 2.**

Bonus: Keep your eyes peeled for dazzling apricot-plum hybrids—pluots, plumcots, and apriums—all summer long.

“Nothing says summer like stone fruits—named for their hard pit—like apricots. But one member of the group—fresh apricots—often gets lost in the crowd. And that’s a shame, because it’s hard to beat their delicate flavor, slightly tart skin, and sweet interior. If the apricots at your supermarket don’t wow you, look for some perfectly ripe, sweet samples at your local farmers’ market through July. Treat apricots like avocados: buy them when they yield slightly to the touch, let them soften in a brown paper bag on the counter, and, when ripe, store them in the fridge for three to five days. These juicy little orbs supply more than pleasure. Expect a good dose of fiber, potassium, and vitamins A, C, and E...all for just 70 calories in an official four-apricot serving. Not content to just slice or nibble your fruit straight off the pit? Try adding slices to yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal. Or stir them into a hearty Moroccan chicken stew. Apricots also add a delightful surprise to grain or green salads, like this one from our Healthy Cook, Kate Sherwood: Top 4 cups salad greens with 2 sliced apricots, half a sliced avocado, and 2 Tbs. sunflower seeds. Whisk together 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil, 1 tsp. balsamic vinegar, and ¼ tsp. salt with a grind of black pepper. Drizzle over the salad. Serves 2. Bonus: Keep your eyes peeled for dazzling apricot-plum hybrids—pluots, plumcots, and apriums—all summer long.

**Summer Fling**

**Miso Broccoli**

In a large non-stick pan, sauté 1 minced garlic clove in 2 Tbs. olive oil for 1 minute. Stir in 1 Tbs. miso paste and 2 Tbs. water. Add 4 cups broccoli florets and stir-fry until tender-crisp, 1-2 minutes. Serves 4.

**DISH of the month**

**P’Zone Defense**

“The ultimate comeback: 17 years after its debut, the cult-favorite P’ZONE is back, returning to Pizza Hut menus nationwide!” announced the chain just in time for this year’s NCAA basketball tournament.

Just what we’ve been waiting for. For the few poor souls who somehow missed the P’Zone’s earlier fame, here’s how the company describes it: “Sealed inside a toasted parmesan pizza crust, the beloved P’ZONE is filled with savory pizza toppings and melted cheese, baked calzone style and served with marinara dipping sauce.” Beloved? Umm...

The TV ads get right to the point: “It’s meaty, cheesy, melty, and you know it’s big.”

Because if there’s one thing Americans need right now, it’s big, cheap pockets of white flour stuffed with cheese and processed meats like sausage and pepperoni. Each Meaty P’Zone has 1,150 calories and close to a day’s worth of saturated fat (21 grams) and sodium (2,270 milligrams). It’s like eating two Pizza Hut pepperoni personal pan pizzas.

The Pepperoni (970 calories) and Supremo (980) P’Zones aren’t much better.

“There is a whole generation of people who have never had the P’Zone,” Pizza Hut’s chief brand officer told Forbes. “We thought it would be fun to introduce it to them during March Madness.” Madness, indeed.

Need honey, peanut butter, or molasses for a recipe but can’t get it out of the measuring spoon or cup? Lightly coat the spoon or cup with oil first. The sticky stuff will slide right off.