

Nutrition Action

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HEALTH LETTER®
CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

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Protect your health...and the planet's

**MISLEADING
ADS**
Don't be fooled

YOGURTS
What's new

*The Changing
American Diet*

M E M O

Preventing the Next Food Outbreak



What will cause the next food poisoning outbreak? *E. coli* in ground beef? *Cyclospora* in cilantro? *Listeria* in soft cheese?

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, *Nutrition Action's* publisher,

is pressing for changes that would prevent—or at least cut short—the next outbreak.

A few of our recent efforts:

■ **Cleaning up poultry.** According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), *Salmonella* causes roughly 1.35 million illnesses, 26,500 hospitalizations, and 420 deaths in the United States each year.

Campylobacter, while less deadly, causes an estimated 1.5 million illnesses.

Nearly one in six cases of *Salmonella* and one in three *Campylobacter* infections show some resistance to antibiotics. A

leading source of both microbes: poultry.

In January, CSPI—along with Consumer Reports, the Consumer Federation of America, Stop Foodborne Illness, and five victims of food poisoning—urged the Department of Agriculture to target the *Salmonella* strains that cause the most harm and to set strong standards to control *Campylobacter*.

We also asked the USDA to require poultry producers to use science-based tools to control risks on the farm, where crowded conditions make it easy for animals to spread germs that make people sick. In Europe, for example, vaccinating chickens and monitoring farms for dangerous bacteria have slashed foodborne illness rates from *Salmonella*.

■ **Tracing the culprits.** In 2018, the Food and Drug Administration struggled to find the source of a nationwide *E. coli* outbreak in romaine lettuce. Grocers and consumers had to toss romaine and packages of mixed greens because investigators couldn't determine which lots were at risk. What a waste.

Last year, the FDA [proposed](#) a rule that would make tainted foods easier to trace by requiring companies to keep better records. We rallied support for the rule, which will transform efforts to solve and prevent outbreaks.

■ **High-risk imports.** A third of our vegetables, half of our fruits, and nearly all of our seafood is imported. Yet the FDA inspects only about 1 percent of imported food. And that

puts us all at risk.

One unusual example: Poppy seeds come from the same plant as morphine. If improperly processed, the seeds can become contaminated with enough opiates to trigger a positive drug test. Brewing tea

from large quantities of contaminated poppy seeds can cause an overdose or even death.

Yet contaminated poppy seeds slip into the country under the FDA's radar. CSPI is urging Congress to boost the agency's resources to help it identify and inspect poppy products along with other high-risk imports.

We should all be able to enjoy eating without having to worry about food poisoning. That's what we're fighting for.

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



Salmonella and *Campylobacter* sicken millions of Americans every year. To be safe, cook poultry to 165°F.

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CELEBRATING
50 YEARS

PAY IT FORWARD

Protect your health...and the planet's

Experts estimate that even if all fossil fuel emissions stopped instantly, the world's food system would still put us on track to exceed the Paris Climate Agreement's goal of only a 1.5°C rise in global temperature by [2100](#). Here's how your diet can make you—and the planet—healthier.



Christopher Gardner is a professor of medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine. His (mostly government-funded) studies have tested diets, foods, and supplements on markers of health. His research also looks at how to fix food systems that promote obesity and diabetes. Gardner, a member of *Nutrition Action's* Science Advisory Board, spoke to Bonnie Liebman.

in the healthy plant-based diet. And they put soda, refined grains, juices, sweets, and white potatoes in the unhealthy plant-based diet.

When they just looked at all plant-based diets versus diets with more animal foods—like meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, eggs, and butter—they saw small differences in cardiovascular disease, weight, diabetes, and other health outcomes that they track.

But when they looked at a healthy plant-based diet versus an animal-based diet, the differences were stunning.

Q: Do we eat a lot of unhealthy plant foods?

A: Yes. High-quality carbs like whole grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits make up only about 10 percent of our calories. But low-quality carbs—mostly added sugars and refined grains—make up roughly 40 percent. It's the elephant in the room.

A Protein Surplus

Q: Do people have to worry that a plant-based diet has too little protein?

A: No. We need a lot less protein than we think, and we eat a lot more protein than we think. The Recommended

Dietary Allowance for protein is about 50 grams a day. But the RDA isn't the average requirement. It's set at above average so that it covers roughly 95 percent of the population.

Even so, the average American eats about 90 grams of protein a day. So many of us are eating about twice the RDA.

Q: You wouldn't know that from protein claims on labels.

A: Right. People are buying protein powder. They're eating protein bars. Where did they get the idea that we're lacking protein?

Q: Is animal protein better for us?

A: People think amino acids are missing in plant proteins. They're not. The 20 amino acids we need are in all plant foods.

Grains are lower in lysine and beans are lower in methionine than some other foods. But no one gets all of their daily protein from a single food. So a typical day of

Healthy Plant Foods

Q: How can vegetables, fruits, and other plant foods make us healthier?

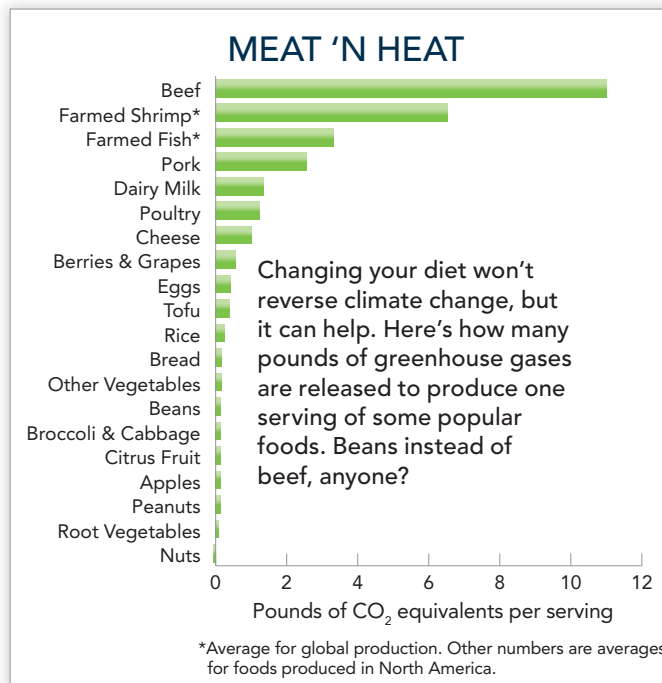
A: Studies that randomly assign people to eat different diets or track what people eat for years have compared those who eat a standard American diet to those who eat more vegetables, fruits, beans, intact whole grains, and other plant foods.

For the most part, people who eat a plant-rich diet have better cholesterol, blood pressure, blood sugar, inflammatory markers—nearly all the lab values we measure.

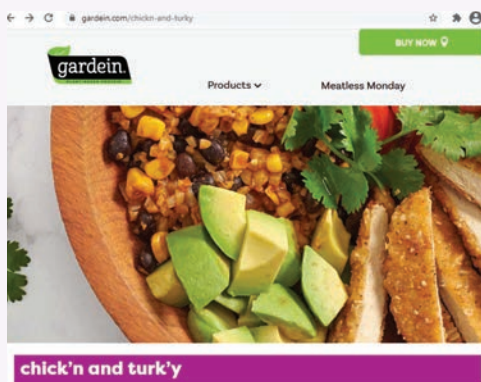
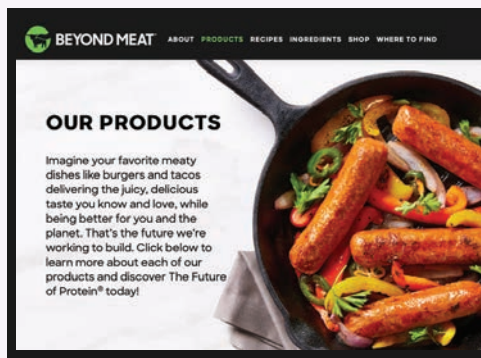
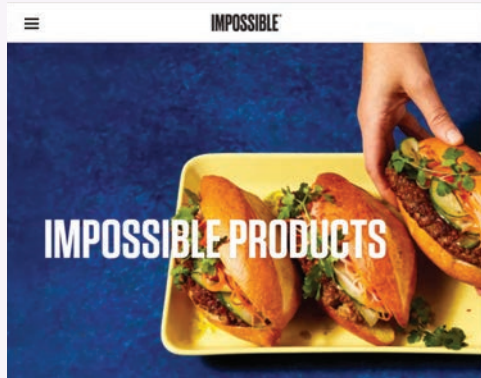
Q: Any plant-based diet?

A: No. If you're eating cookies and Coca-Cola, that's plant-based, but it's not healthy.

Harvard's Frank Hu, Walter Willett, and other researchers broke plant-based foods into two groups. They put vegetables, fruits, beans, nuts, and whole grains



BEYOND IMPOSSIBLE?



Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods have become the 800-pound gorillas of the plant-based meat world.

Supermarkets still sell meatless burgers, nuggets, etc., from Gardein, Morningstar, and others. (Many are lower in saturated fat than meat.) But Impossible's burgers, sausages, etc., are also at Burger King, Starbucks, Red Robin, Cheesecake Factory, and elsewhere. And Beyond's versions are at Denny's, Dunkin', TGI Fridays, and Uno, among other chains.

How healthy are they? It depends.

■ **Impossible Burgers.** Like beef, they contain heme (but from a non-meat source). Heme may help form carcinogenic N-nitroso compounds in your gut, which could help explain why red-meat eaters have a higher risk of colorectal cancer.

And, thanks to its coconut oil, a 4 oz. Impossible Burger has 8 grams of saturated fat. (A McDonald's ¼ pound beef patty has 7 grams.)

■ **Beyond Meat Burgers.** They're heme-free, and a 4 oz. burger has 5 grams of saturated fat.

Of course, once a restaurant get its hands on either burger, all bets are off. A TGI Fridays Beyond Meat Cheeseburger with fries, for example, has 1,210 calories and more than a day's saturated fat and sodium.

But a damaged planet threatens everyone's health. That's not nothing. Arguably, it's everything.

comes from beef and about a fifth comes from milk.

The methane that's burping out of the animals with ruminant stomachs like cattle and sheep takes much of the blame. As a greenhouse gas, [methane](#) is about 30 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

That's why chickens and pigs are better than cattle. Beef and lamb are the biggest offenders.

Q: How do cattle boost carbon dioxide emissions?

A: It's primarily because they have to eat so much corn or soy to produce each pound of meat.

We use fossil fuels to process and transport all that feed. And the feed is grown using fertilizers that emit [nitrous oxide](#), a greenhouse gas that's 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Meanwhile, the cattle industry is chopping down rainforests and tropical forests in Brazil and elsewhere either to make room for cattle to graze or to grow the crops to feed livestock.

Forests absorb the carbon dioxide that we spew into the air when we burn fossil fuels. By chopping them down, we lose one of our few weapons in the battle against climate change.

And most felled trees eventually release their stored carbon into the atmosphere.

Q: Do animal-based diets have other environmental costs?

A: Yes. Growing all that soy and corn is destroying our topsoil. The rains are washing it away. The winds are blowing it away.

And the nitrogen runoff from using so much fertilizer to grow crops like soy and corn has led to dead zones in places like the Gulf of Mexico.

Growing a single crop like soy or corn also reduces biodiversity. Soybeans and corn together occupy [40 percent](#) of the total

eating a variety of foods easily supplies all the amino acids we need in the proportions needed, with or without animal foods.

Q: Do people in other countries eat as much meat as we do?

A: I'm stunned by how much meat we eat in the U.S. It's staggeringly higher than most of the world. According to a 2018 [report](#) by the Food and Agriculture Organization, meat and poultry consumption in North America is about 200 pounds per person per year.

In contrast, the average is about 140 pounds in Europe, 130 pounds in Latin America and the Caribbean, 60 pounds in

East Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific, and only 30 pounds in Africa.

But meat eating is on the rise in India and China. If you care about your children and the next generation, cutting back on meat is a pretty powerful message.

A Planet at Risk

Q: Are we in trouble even if meat intake doesn't rise?

A: Yes. Animal agriculture is having a horrific effect on the environment. Globally, livestock accounts for an estimated [15 percent](#) of greenhouse gas emissions caused by humans. Roughly half of that

MOOVE OVER, ELSIE?

“Perfect Day dairy protein is created by fermentation, not cows,” says manufacturer [Perfectdayfoods.com](https://www.perfectdayfoods.com).

“To create an animal-free version of milk proteins, we simply had to introduce... animal genes to an organism other than a cow.” That organism: a type of fungi called *Trichoderma reesei*.

So far, Perfect Day’s “non-animal whey protein” is in only a handful of foods, like N!ck’s and Brave Robot’s vegan frozen desserts. (Too bad they’re loaded with saturated fat from coconut oil.) Startups like Change Foods are working on animal-free cheese.

Also new: [Nature’s Fynd](#) dairy-free cream cheese and meatless breakfast patties, both made by fermenting *Fusarium flavolapis*.

Unlike Perfect Day, which uses fungi to make whey, Nature’s Fynd is *made of* fungi. So are Quorn’s meatless products (they’re *Fusarium venenatum*).

Some people report reactions—nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and occasionally hives or difficulty breathing—after eating Quorn, which has been sold in the U.S. since 2002. (See [cspinet.org/quorn](https://www.cspinet.org/quorn).)

Will Nature’s Fynd or future fungi-based foods also cause reactions? It’s too early to say. If you have allergies, especially to mushrooms or mold (both fungi), use caution.

could put two ounces of chicken or fish or beef on top, instead of six or 12 ounces like a steakhouse serving.

Alt Meats & Dairy

Q: Are processed plant-based meats good for our health?

A: I’ve been a vegetarian since 1983, and I make my own bean or lentil burgers. I think they taste better than packaged meatless burgers like Beyond Meat or Impossible. But it takes longer to prepare them, and I’m not looking for the taste of meat.

I’m a proponent of eating whole foods. But for the sake of the climate and for health, I’m open to processed plant-based meats as alternatives. [See “Beyond Impossible?” p. 4.]

cropland in the United States.

Specialty crops, which include all other vegetables as well as fruits and nuts, use less than [4 percent](#) of our cropland.

Q: How much would it help to move toward a plant-based diet?

A: My colleagues and I asked: What if we cut total protein intakes about 25 percent, from around 90 grams a day to just under 70 grams? And what if we also shifted 25 percent of our protein to plant protein?

Q: So we’d eat less protein, and we’d get more of the protein we eat from plants?

A: Yes. Using data from Marty Heller, a researcher at the University of Michigan, our co-author Rachael Garrett [calculated](#) that this 25–25 shift would lead to 40 percent fewer U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture.

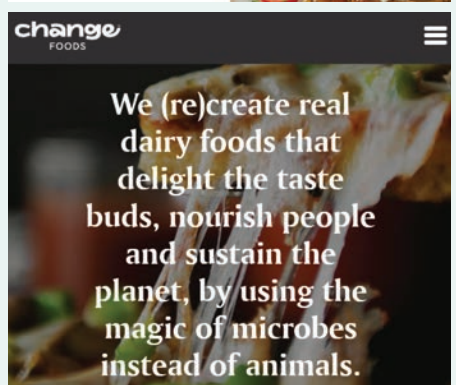
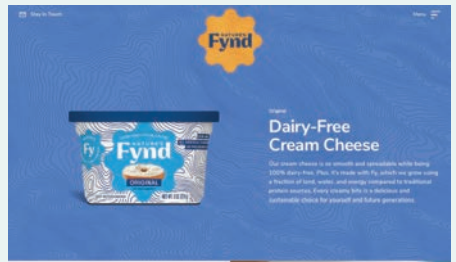
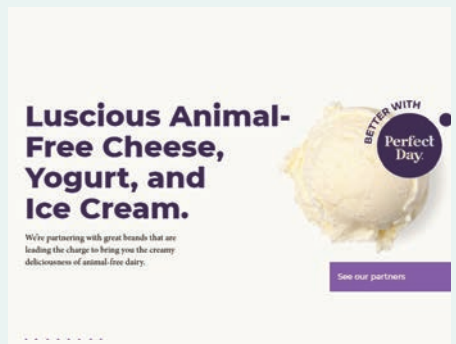
That would allow us to meet 8 percent of the reductions the U.S. pledged to make to the Paris Climate Agreement. That’s a huge impact from just one modest change. Bigger benefits could come from bigger shifts.

Q: What does a 25–25 shift look like in what people eat?

A: It’s similar to what the Culinary Institute of America calls the “protein flip,” which is part of its [Menus of Change](#) initiative—in partnership with Harvard—to promote “plant forward” dishes in restaurants.

The idea was built on the “dessert flip.” People go to a restaurant and get a huge piece of cheesecake with a raspberry on top. Why not a bowl of raspberries with a dollop of cheesecake on top?

So the Institute came up with the protein flip. America is obsessed with having steak or pork or chicken or fish at the center of the plate. What if the center of the plate had seared vegetables, heritage grains, and fabulous legumes seasoned with Moroccan spices? Then you



Q: Those companies aren’t just making their products for vegetarians.

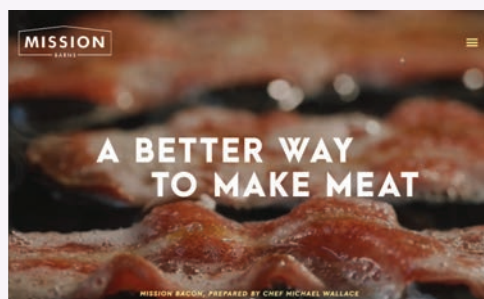
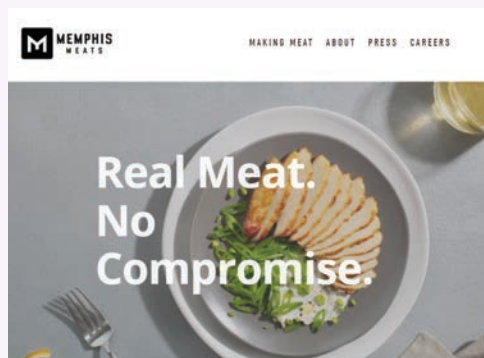
A: Right. When I was invited to the Beyond Meat kitchen four or five years ago, they were grilling their burgers. At the time, they didn’t quite sound or smell the same as meat while they were grilling.

I thought, who cares? It just has to taste like meat. And they said, no, if we want meat eaters to shift, it has to sound and smell like a sizzling beef burger. Now I see that those sensory similarities matter.

Q: And you later did a study funded by Beyond Meat?

A: Yes. We gave people ordinary burgers, sausages, and chicken for two months and then Beyond Meat versions of those

CULTURAL REVOLUTION?



“Cells are the building blocks of life,” explains the website of (Bill Gates-backed) [Memphis Meats](#). “We cultivate the cells into meat by feeding them their favorite nutrients.”

Companies around the world are racing to create meat, poultry, and fish out of animal cells that are grown—that is, cultured—in a lab.

As of March 2021, only one cell-cultured meat had been approved for sale: The [Singapore Food Agency](#) allows (San Francisco-based) Eat Just to sell its “chicken bites” at the company’s Singaporean restaurant partner.

Among the stumbling blocks: It’s not easy to create the structure—or scaffolding—that holds meat cells together. (Some companies are trying 3D printers.) And the new “meats” would have to pass muster with each country’s food safety agencies. (Our FDA and USDA would both play a role.)

Burgers, steaks, bacon, chicken, salmon, tuna, shrimp...someday, they may come from a lab rather than an ocean, farm, or slaughterhouse.

Stay tuned.

Someone recently sent me some plant-based shrimp. And now we’ve got Memphis Meats, which is working on cell-cultured meat. They’re growing meat in labs. [See “Cultural Revolution?”]

Q: But that’s not plant-based.

A: No, but it would cause less harm to the environment, animal welfare, and maybe to workers. My students have been struck by the labor abuses in slaughterhouses that are largely due to line speeds and the repetitive cuts that they’re making day after day, and the injuries that causes.

Q: What about taste?

A: Let’s not forget the joy of eating. The trifecta is food that’s delicious, healthy, and good for the environment. 🍌

foods for two months, or vice versa. We used the most commonly eaten type of beef burger, which is 20 percent fat. It was grass-fed beef from a local grower.

Q: Was bad cholesterol lower when people ate Beyond Meat?

A: Yes, it was about 10 points lower. Most of the Beyond meats had less saturated fat than the real meats, but I was still surprised that LDL fell that much.

Blood pressure was no different, probably because sodium intakes were similar. Beyond’s beef and chicken have more sodium, but people salted the real beef or chicken. And both Beyond and regular

sausages are high in sodium.

But if you look at greenhouse gas emissions or land or water use, there’s no question that a switch to plant foods has a massive benefit for the environment.

Q: You’re not just talking about meat?

A: Right. For example, I’ve counted 17 different kinds of plant-based milk. I’ve been drinking soy milk for decades. Now there’s milk made out of every kind of nut plus flax and hemp. They’re even using fungi to make milk protein. [See “Moove Over, Elsie?” p. 5.]



Looking for delicious meat-free recipes that feature whole foods?

Veggie Nice! (\$12) contains a month’s worth of main dishes. To order, go to store.nutritionaction.com.

Quick Studies

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

Processed Meat & Memory



Bacon, cold cuts, ham, hot dogs, sausages, and other processed meats cause colorectal cancer, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Could they also increase the risk of Alzheimer's or other dementia?

Scientists studied nearly 494,000 people aged 40 to 69. After eight years, those who ate processed meats at least five times a week had a 67 percent higher risk of dementia than those who ate those meats less than once a week. Eating processed meats even once a week was linked to a 13 percent higher risk.

What to do: Limit processed meats to lower your risk of cancer. It's too early to know if that will also help protect you from dementia. The researchers took into account many factors, including education, socioeconomic status, smoking, family history of dementia, and diet. But something else about the processed meat eaters might explain their higher risk. Stay tuned.

[Am. J. Clin. Nutr. 2021. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqab028.](#)

Mammograms & Vaccines

Covid vaccines can temporarily cause swollen lymph nodes that look suspicious on a mammogram. For example, swelling occurred in 12 percent of people after their first Moderna dose and in 16 percent after their second. It was half as common in those over 65.



What to do: Due for a routine mammogram? Some experts advise waiting four to six weeks after any Covid vaccine. Check with your doctor.

[BMJ 2021. doi:10.1136/bmj.n617.](#)

Statins & Muscle Pain



Cholesterol-lowering statins cause severe myopathy (muscle pain or weakness) in about one out of 10,000 people per year. Do fears about muscle symptoms lead some patients to stop taking statins unnecessarily?

Researchers studied 151 people who were thinking of stopping—or had stopped—taking their statins. Those who hadn't stopped were asked to. Then each patient was given either 20 mg a day of atorvastatin (Lipitor) or a placebo for six two-month periods in random order. No one knew which pill they were taking.

Muscle symptoms didn't differ during the statin and placebo periods. Intolerable muscle pain led 18 people to drop out while on the statin and 13 to withdraw while on the placebo.

What to do: Got muscle symptoms? Don't assume that statins are to blame.

[BMJ 2021. doi:10.1136/bmj.n135.](#)

Keep Walking, Shopping, Gardening...

Nearly one in four women over age 65 are unable to walk just two or three blocks at a stretch. A new study reports that even light physical activity—like gardening, washing dishes, or walking while shopping—may help keep people mobile.

Scientists followed 5,735 mobile women aged 63 or older who wore an accelerometer on their hip for a week.

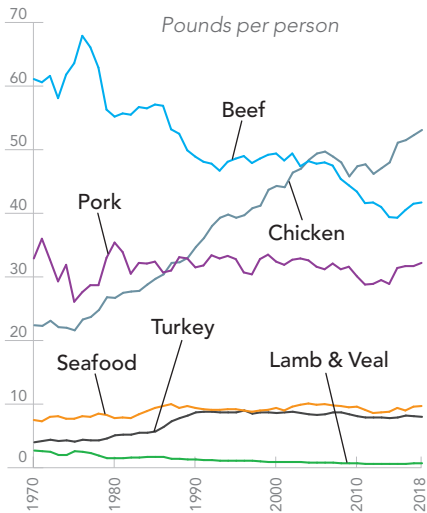
After five years, those who did roughly 5 to 10 hours of light activity a day had a 40 percent lower risk of disability than those who did 4 hours or less. (Disability meant that they couldn't walk a block or up a flight of stairs on a typical day.)

What to do: Aim for at least 5 hours of light activity a day. Better yet, try to get 2½ hours of moderate—or 1¼ hours of vigorous—activity every week, as the [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) advises (see Jul./Aug. 2019, p. 9). 🍷

[JAMA Netw. Open 2021. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.0005.](#)



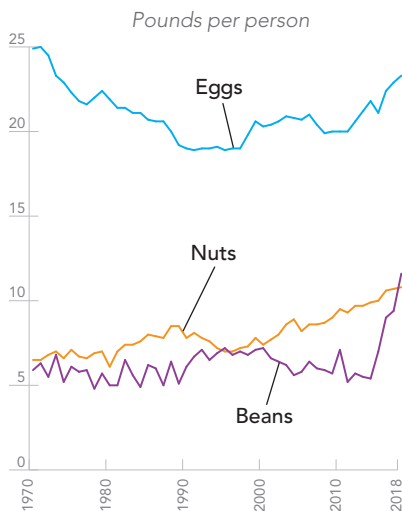
Meat, Poultry, Seafood



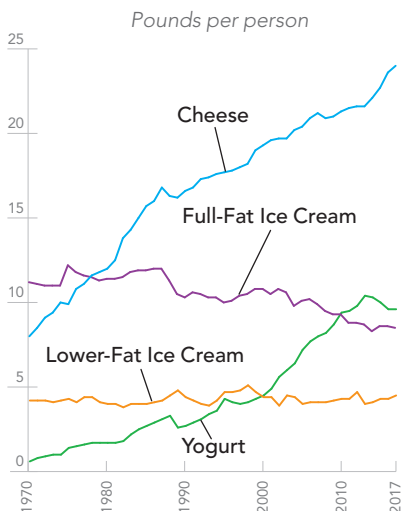
Chicken still rules, but beef has been inching up since 2015. (Sadly, it's the food that most harms the environment.) Together, red meats (beef, pork, lamb, veal) edge out white meats (poultry, seafood), but just barely. We can do better ...to preserve our health and the planet.

Eggs, Nuts, Beans

Eggs are making a comeback, despite advice from health authorities to not exceed one a day. The good news: nuts and beans (including split peas and lentils) are also up. The graph shows weights for dried beans. As eaten, they weigh two to three times more. Go plants!



Cheese, Ice Cream, Yogurt



Cheese is still on a roll...and on nearly every sandwich, salad, burger, pasta, and, of course, pizza. Arteries, beware. Yogurt may have peaked after a 45-year climb. Full-fat ice cream is slipping, but it's still ahead of lower-fat ice cream, which includes "lights" like Halo Top and Edy's Slow Churned.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture.

THE CH AMERICA

Still Far Fr

BY BONNIE LIEBMA

How good is the average American's diet? Let's just say we haven't exactly made the Honor Roll.

Big picture: In 1970, we consumed around 2,000 calories a day. Now we're around 2,500. That's according to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's](#) most recent estimates of what food companies and farmers produce (adjusted for waste, loss, imports, and exports).

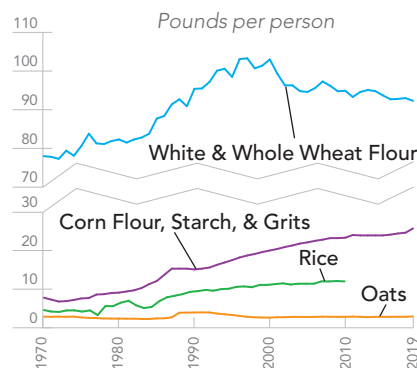
No wonder 74 percent of adults and 35 percent of children now fall into the overweight or obese range.

What's more, roughly 600 of our daily calories come from (mostly refined) grains and white potatoes, and 350 more come from added sugars. Together, that's almost 4 out of every 10 calories we swallow.

To make matters worse, in 2011 the government stopped tracking most added fats and oils (which then supplied nearly a quarter of our calories) as well as rice. Odds are, the numbers haven't changed drastically since then, but who knows?

Want to boost your grades? Start by filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables so there's less room for the white stuff (flour, sugar, potatoes). Okay, class dismissed.

Grains

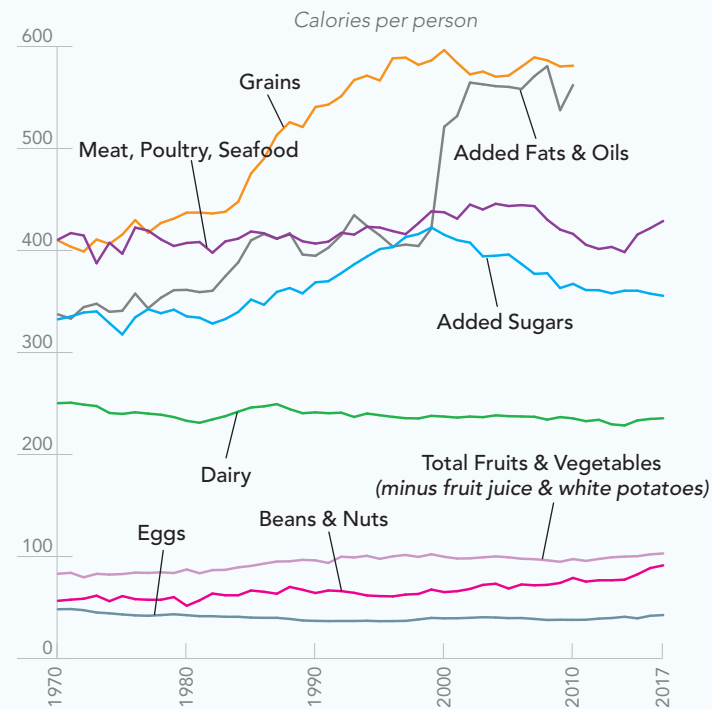


Wheat flour is down 10 percent from its 2000 peak, but refined grains are still too high. (The USDA lumps together white and whole wheat flour, but most is white, according to studies that ask people what they

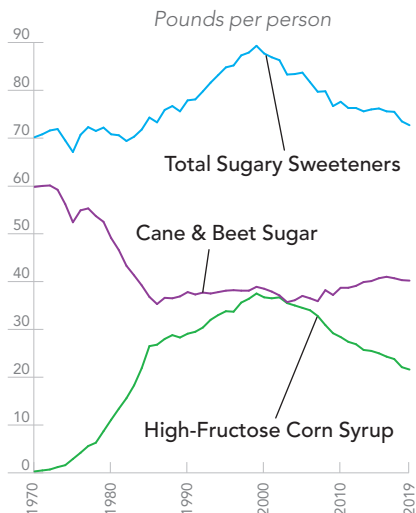
eat.) It hasn't helped that restaurants serve oversized buns, bagels, burritos, muffins, pastas, pizza, cupcakes, cookies, pastries, etc. Corn flour is climbing, though it's dwarfed by wheat. (Note the gap in the graph between 30 and 70 lbs.)

CHANGING AN DIET

from an A+
N & LINDSAY MOYER

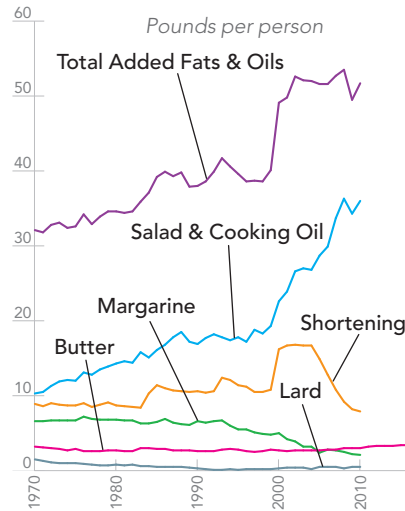


Added Sugars



Overall, sugary sweeteners are down nearly 20 percent from their 1999 peak, and are closing in on their 1970 level. Most of the fall is due to a sharp decline in high-fructose corn syrup. But regular (cane and beet) sugar, as well as honey, agave, turbinado, etc., are no better for you. All are added sugars.

Added Fats & Oils

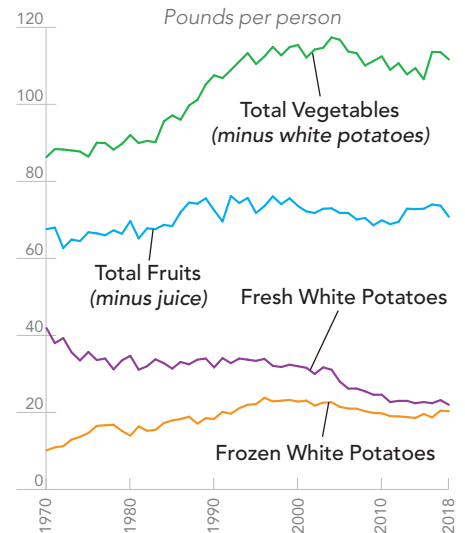


See that jump in total added fats in 2000? It's due to more companies reporting that year. (The actual rise was likely more gradual.) That said, we never cut back on all added fats, as some people claim. Around 2005, we did start cutting shortening and margarine (maybe to avoid trans fats).

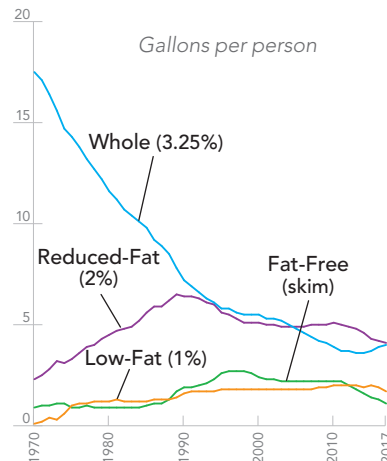
Sadly, the government stopped collecting most added fats and oils data in 2011. Until that changes, we're in the dark.

Fruits, Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables have barely budged in decades. (That's veggies without white potatoes, which are closer to white flour than to kale, and fruits without fruit juice, which is closer to soda than to blueberries.) Move over, meat. Make more room for the good stuff.



Milk



Whole milk is no longer in free fall. But most people have sensibly stuck to lower-fats, which make up two-thirds of the market. Total (cow's) milk is down about 25 percent since 2000. The growing popularity of plant milks may partly explain why. 🍌

FOOL US ONCE?

BY LINDSAY MOYER & BONNIE LIEBMAN

You gotta hand it to Madison Avenue. It's not easy to stretch the truth to make a buck. Is that American ingenuity...or just proof that you can fool some of the people some of the time?

You won't be one of them. Here's the latest crop of tricky food and supplement ads.

Smooth Move



“Not now. Not ever,” says the Smoothie King ad. “We promise. Whole fruits & organic veggies go in. Syrups, artificial colors, flavors and preservatives never will.”

Very clever. The ad’s long list of “No-No” ingredients looks impressive.

So what if we’ve never seen some of them (like sodium nitrite) in smoothies? Or if others (like partially hydrogenated oils and cyclamates) have been banned in this country? Or if others (like soy) are perfectly safe?

Here’s what the ad leaves out: Along with those “whole fruits,” Smoothie King adds fruit juice to roughly half of its smoothies. And those liquid calories are more likely to lead to weight gain than munching on the fruit they came from.

What’s more, about a quarter of the chain’s smoothies have added sugar (“turbinado”), sugary frozen yogurt, or sugar-drenched strawberries. And two protein powders (Gladiator, Lean1) that are added to some smoothies contain the questionable artificial sweetener sucralose (which—surprise!—is absent from the No-No list).

The bottom line: Most of Smoothie King’s largest (40 oz.) smoothies have 400 to 800 calories. And even some of the smallest (20 oz.) are more than a snack. Whole fruits & veggies, anyone?

Bran New Spin



“Real honey. Whole-grain oats. A new spin on Kellogg’s Raisin Bran.”

It’s a new spin, all right...a more-sugar, less-fiber spin.

Each cup of Kellogg’s Raisin Bran Toasted Oats & Honey has 3 teaspoons of added sugar and more white rice than oats. (Original Raisin Bran has 2 tsp. of added sugar and no rice.) That leaves less room for fiber-rich bran.

As for the company’s four other spin-offs (Raisin Bran with Bananas or with Cranberries and Raisin Bran Crunch Original or Vanilla Almond), think of them all as Sugary White Rice Raisin Bran. A better new spin: Toss fruit into any brand’s bran flakes.

The Whole Truth?



“Naturelo has vitamin E from sunflowers,” says the woman in the multivitamin’s TV ad. “Ours has retinyl palmitate,” counters the other company’s lab-coated scientist.

“Organic broccoli, carrots, and blueberries,” says the woman. “Pyridoxine hydrochloride,” says the scientist.

That’s vitamin B-6. Maybe Naturelo forgot that its **Whole Food Multivitamin for Women** gets most of its B-6 from pyridoxal-5-phosphate, not blueberries.

That’s no surprise, since each four-capsule “serving” of the multi has only 200 milligrams of “organic fruit & vegetable blend.” That’s about 1/20 of a teaspoon, we estimate.

Pricey vitamins—Naturelo costs \$47 a month—can’t replace fruits and veggies. Looking for a multivitamin? Many cost far less. Looking for whole food? Hit the grocery store.

B Vitamin Baloney



“Introducing **Starbucks Coffee with Essential Vitamins**,” says the TV ad. “The taste you love blended with five essential B vitamins. To help support a healthy metabolism and keep your body running at its best.”

It’s the old dump-in-a-few-unnecessary-vitamins ploy.

Thiamin (B-1) and niacin (B-3) are added to most white flour, so we already get plenty. And virtually no one runs short on pantothenic acid (B-5) or biotin (B-7). To get a biotin deficiency, you’d have to eat excessive amounts of raw (but not cooked) egg whites for months.

Added B-12 might be useful for people over 50, some of whom produce too little stomach acid to absorb the naturally occurring B-12 in foods. But Starbucks adds only 20 percent of a day’s worth per serving. Take a multivitamin instead.

And forget that “healthy metabolism” baloney. Don’t count on extra B vitamins to help you burn more calories or feel more energetic.

“Get more from the cup you love,” says the ad. Get more of the overcrowded coffee market sounds more like it.

Sweet Dreams



“Honey is good for me,” says the **National Honey Board’s** ad, noting that the sweetener is a “delicious source” of vitamins and minerals.

Maybe if you eat it by the cup.

A one-tablespoon serving of honey, on the other hand, has an insignificant amount (less than 2 percent of a day’s worth) of just about any nutrient, according to the USDA.

The notable exceptions: it’s got 60 calories and a third of a day’s sugar (honey counts as “added sugar”). Sheesh.

The Fine Print



“The shape that stole your heart is back,” says the **Cheerios** ad.

As the tiny print at the bottom says, eating 3 grams a day of soluble fiber from whole-grain oat foods may reduce the risk of heart disease.

The catch: A serving of original Cheerios has just 1 gram, notes the ad’s fine print, so you’d have to

eat three servings a day. And the other four flavors—**Blueberry, Chocolate, Cinnamon, and Honey Nut**—have just “.75 grams.” So now we’re talking *four* servings a day. (Each serving has 2½ to 3 teaspoons of added sugar, which leaves less room for oats.)

Miss that decimal point, and it looks like 75 grams! Of course, the ad could have written “0.75 grams” to avoid confusion. Probably just an honest mistake.



Just Say No

“At **Pure Leaf**, saying no is the most important ingredient in making herbal iced tea,” says the TV ad. “By selecting the finest botanicals, we say no caffeine, no stress, no better way to relax after a long day of...anything. No is beautiful.”

Oops. Pure Leaf forgot “no sugar.” The teas in the ad—**Mango Hibiscus** and **Raspberry Chamomile**—have 27 grams (6½ teaspoons) of added sugars in each 18.5 oz. bottle.

Why not show the **Unsweetened Mango Hibiscus**? No sugar is beautiful. 🍷

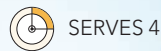
The Healthy Cook

The Other Green Bean



Edamame (immature soybeans) have a velvety texture and a less-starchy taste than your average beans, peas, or lentils. And they pair beautifully with spring vegetables like asparagus and chives. 🌱

Spring Edamame



SERVES 4

- 2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 leeks or 1 bunch scallions, white and pale green parts only, thinly sliced
- 1 fennel bulb, trimmed, cored, and thinly sliced
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup homemade vegetable stock* or water
- 2 cups edamame, thawed from frozen
- 2 cups chopped asparagus
- ¼ cup minced fresh chives
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt

1. In a large heavy pot over medium-high heat, heat the oil until shimmering.
2. Sauté the leeks (or scallions), fennel, and celery until lightly browned, 5–7 minutes.
3. Add the stock (or water), edamame, and asparagus. Cook until the asparagus is bright green, 1–2 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat. Season with the chives, lemon zest and juice, and salt.

PER SERVING (1½ cups): calories 210 | total fat 11 g | sat fat 1.5 g
carbs 19 g | fiber 10 g | total sugar 6 g | added sugar 0 g
protein 13 g | sodium 190 mg

*Tip: To make a quick vegetable stock, simmer the trimmings from the leeks, fennel, and celery in 4 cups water for 20 minutes, then strain through a coffee filter.

Photo: Kate Sherwood/CSPI.

For more recipes

Go to nutritionaction.com/edamame for **Edamame & Crispy Tofu Bowl** and **Edamame & Herb Salad**

Cooking questions?

Write to Chef Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org

Get Some Culture

What's new in the yogurt aisle

BY LINDSAY MOYER & KAAMILAH MITCHELL

What's in your yogurt cup? Cultured milk? Oats? Almonds? Soy? Coconut with pea protein? Our 8-step guide to the best yogurts applies to them all. Turn the page for our take on the latest probiotic, lower-sugar, and plant-based yogurts.

1 Slash the added sugar. Our Best Bites have none. That's because they're plain dairy yogurts or they add sweeteners like stevia or monk fruit extract, but not sucralose, aspartame, or acesulfame potassium, which we rate as "avoid." (See chemicalcuisine.org.)

Exception: "Plain" soy and other plant-based yogurts typically are sweetened unless the label says they're not. Most add a teaspoon or two of sugar to make up for the naturally occurring milk sugar they lack.

Don't like plain dairy yogurt? Our Honorable Mentions have no more than 9 grams (2 tsp.) of added sugar in a 5 or 6 oz. container.

2 Mind the mix-ins. Many Chobani Flips, Noosa Mates, and their kin add more sugar (from honey roasted nuts, dark chocolate, etc.) to their already-sweet yogurt. Most Chobani yogurts with oatmeal are also too sugary. Forget Flip & friends.

Instead, get more yogurt for your buck from a Best Bite or Honorable Mention. Want toppings? Add your own toasted nuts or seeds, low-sugar bran flakes, or fresh or frozen berries, peaches, mango, or other fruit.

3 Look for 0% to 2% milkfat. That means nonfat to lowfat. Any higher (3% and up) means whole milk or whole milk *plus* cream, which does your heart no favors. That's why our Best Bites and Honorable Mentions have no more

than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving (2½ grams for 7 oz. containers).

Plant-based yogurts that add little or no coconut or coconut oil come in under the limit. Plus many of them have extra healthy fats from nuts, soy, or other oils.

4 Check the protein. A serving of our Best Bites or Honorable Mentions has at least 6 grams, the amount in a non-Greek dairy yogurt. Greek yogurt and Icelandic skyr have at least twice that much, while many plant-based yogurts fall short. (See "Dairy-free Decisions," p. 14.)



Add fruit or nuts to plain yogurt. It's hard to find one creamier than Fage Total 0% or 2% Greek.

But don't be fooled by The Greek Gods "Greek Style" yogurt. Unlike most Greek yogurts, it isn't strained—that concentrates the protein—so it has roughly half the protein of Fage or Chobani.

5 Look at calcium. Best Bites and Honorable Mentions have at least 10 percent of the Daily Value. That's

what you get in most Greeks, which lose some calcium when they're strained.

Too bad some plant-based yogurts add little or no calcium. That goes for Chobani, Activia, Forager Project, Kite Hill Almond Milk, and Siggi's. In contrast, Silk, So Delicious, Oatly, and others add enough calcium to match dairy.

6 Don't expect vitamin D. Unlike milk, yogurt often has no added vitamin D. Some exceptions: most Oikos Triple Zero, Oikos Pro, GoodBelly, and So Delicious add 10 percent of a day's worth.

7 Go lactose-free if you need to. Yogurt cultures help digest its lactose (milk sugar). So even if you have lactose intolerance, you might be able to handle more than you think.

If not, look for brands that add lactase, the enzyme that breaks down lactose. Or go plant-based.

8 Try to minimize the plastic. Many companies claim that their plastic No. 5 (polypropylene) tubs are recyclable. Not so fast.

Ever notice the "not recycled in all communities" in small print on some labels? And even if your town collects No. 5 yogurt tubs, they may not get [recycled](#). Ditto for No. 6 (polystyrene). (See Apr. 2021, p. 8.)

Unfortunately, there's not much you can do other than look for the rare (and typically pricier) brands—like Nounós—that are packed in glass.

A bigger tub may save a little plastic per serving, but only if it's made with a thinner plastic (like Chobani), rather than a thicker plastic (like Fage).

Got time? Make your own yogurt. Simple how-to guides abound online.



Pick a Probiotic?

The evidence is unimpressive, so don't choose your yogurt by its bugs alone. Here's what we know about some popular strains:

■ **Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG (LGG).** It's in **Chobani Probiotic**, which touts "immune health + digestive health + gut health." But no good studies have tested whether LGG

Do probiotics curb belly woes? The evidence is skimpy.

helps prevent colds or flu. And while an analysis of 12 trials in nearly 1,500 people found that LGG may cut the risk of diarrhea from antibiotics, the evidence was stronger for children than for adults.¹

■ **Bifidobacterium lactis DN-173 010.** It's in **Activia**, which Dannon says "may help reduce the frequency of minor digestive discomfort" (gas, bloating, rumbling, etc.) if you eat two servings a day for two weeks. Yet symptoms improved (modestly) in only one of the two trials of Activia—both funded by Dannon.^{2,3}

■ **Bifidobacterium lactis BB-12.** "May help support healthy digestion when consumed daily," says **GoodBelly Probiotics**. But in the best study—of 1,248 adults who reported just two to four bowel movements a week—those who took the BB-12 dose in GoodBelly daily for four weeks had no more bowel movements than placebo takers.⁴

—Caitlin Dow

¹ *Aliment. Pharmacol. Ther.* 42: 1149, 2015.

² *Br. J. Nutr.* 102: 1654, 2009.

³ *Neurogastroenterol. Motil.* 25: 331, 2013.

⁴ *Br. J. Nutr.* 114: 1638, 2015.

Going, going... gone?

It's easier than ever to find a sweet-tasting yogurt that's not sugar laden. Some of the best:

■ **No added sugar.** Instead of sugar, Best Bite **Chobani Complete** adds stevia and monk fruit extract. **Two Good** (made by Dannon) adds only stevia. The stevia in both is Reb M, a newer extract that tastes more like sugar.

Too bad Two Good just misses a Best Bite. It's lower in calcium than other Greek yogurts. That may be because of its "unique slow straining." (Dannon doesn't say.)

■ **A teaspoon or less of added sugar.** Instead of low-calorie sweeteners like stevia, these Honorable Mentions add just a little sugar, but they still taste plenty sweet: **Chobani Probiotic** and **Less Sugar** have only 1 teaspoon of added sugar per serving. So do most of the **Siggi's 2%** varieties. And **Fage BestSelf** adds just half a teaspoon.

Before you buy, check the ingredients for chicory root (aka inulin). The processed fiber, which often shows up in lower-sugar yogurts (**Fage BestSelf**, **Chobani Complete**, **Chobani Probiotic**), gives some people gas. If that's you, try **Chobani Less Sugar**, **Two Good**, or **Siggi's** (see photo).



Plenty sweet, thanks to stevia or (a little) added sugar.

Dairy-free Decisions

Dropping dairy? You have more "yogurt alternatives" to choose from than ever before. Nearly all miss a Best Bite or Honorable Mention...but some come closer than others.

■ **Coconut.** It's a big chunk of the plant-based yogurt market, probably because coconut's creamy texture helps mimic milk's. But—unlike the healthy fat in almonds or soy—nearly all of coconut's fat is saturated, to the tune of 4 to 8 grams in a 5.3 oz. tub.

Strike two: Most brands have next-to-no protein. (They've got about 1 gram.) Exception: **Siggi's Plant-Based Coconut Blend** adds enough pea protein and macadamias to hit 10 grams. And most flavors boast just 1½ teaspoons of added sugar and creaminess to spare. But if you want calcium from your yogurt, you'll have to look elsewhere.

■ **Oat.** Oats make an über-creamy plant-based milk, but we found many "oatgurts" to be a little gelatinous or sticky.



Silk and Activia drop the dairy but are still delish.

And most brands are low in protein (around 3 grams per serving).

■ **Almond.** Two brands have enough almonds (**Silk**) or almonds plus fava bean protein (**Activia**) to hit 5 grams of protein, just 1 gram shy of our minimum for Best Bites and Honorable Mentions. Both are yummy.

Of the two, only Silk adds calcium. Its almond yogurt has 10 percent of a day's worth, compared to Activia's 4 percent. But Silk also adds more sugar (to all its flavors except **Plain** and **Unsweet Vanilla**).

■ **Soy.** The old standby comes closest to the taste of dairy. It's also a reliable source of protein (around 6 grams per serving) and is higher in potassium than plantgurts made from coconut, oats, or almonds.

Of the two big soy brands—**Silk** and **Stonyfield Organic**—we'd go with Silk. It tastes great, and you'll save about 2 teaspoons of added sugar. 🍌

Go, Gurt!

Best Bites (✓✓) have no more than 2 grams of saturated fat (2.5 grams for larger, 7 oz. tubs), at least 6 grams of protein and 10 percent of a day's calcium, no added sugar, and no sucralose, aspartame, or acesulfame potassium. **Honorable Mentions** (✓) have the same criteria, except for added sugar: They can have up to 2 teaspoons. Yogurts are ranked from least to most saturated fat and added sugar, then most to least protein and calcium, then least to most calories.

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Added Sugar (tsp)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)
Dairy, plain (5.3 oz., unless noted)					
✓✓ Fage Total 0% Greek (6 oz.)	90	0	0	18	15
✓✓ Chobani Non-Fat Greek (6 oz.)	90	0	0	16	15
✓✓ Siggi's 0% Skyr	90	0	0	16	10
✓✓ Oikos 0% Greek	80	0	0	15	15
✓✓ Stonyfield Organic 0%	70	0	0	7	20
✓✓ Oikos 2% Pro (6 oz.)	160	0.5	0	25	20
✓✓ Icelandic Provisions 1.5% Skyr	120	1.5	0	17	15
Two Good Greek	80	1.5	0	12	6
✓✓ Siggi's 2% Skyr (6 oz.)	120	2	0	17	15
✓✓ Chobani Low-Fat Greek (6 oz.)	130	2	0	17	15
✓✓ YQ by Yoplait	100	2	0	17	10
✓✓ Fage BestSelf Greek	110	2	0	15	15
✓✓ Fage Total 2% Greek (7 oz.)	140	2.5	0	20	20
Fage Total 5% Greek (7 oz.)	190	7	0	18	20
Dairy, flavored (5.3 oz., unless noted)					
✓✓ Oikos 2% Pro ¹	140	0	0	20	15
✓✓ Light + Fit Collagen & Antioxidants ¹	90	0	0	15	10
✓✓ Oikos Triple Zero Greek ¹	100	0	0	15	10
Light + Fit Greek ¹	80	0	0.5 ^s	12	10
✓ Siggi's 0% Skyr ¹	110	0	1.5	15	10
✓ Chobani Blended 0% Greek Vanilla	110	0	2	12	10
✓ Chobani Fruit on the Bottom 0% Greek ¹	110	0	2	11	10
Activia Probiotic Greek ¹	130	0	3	12	10
Two Good Greek ¹	80	1	0	12	6
✓ Chobani Probiotic ¹	110	1	1	10	10
✓ Icelandic Provisions 1.5% Skyr—except Coconut ¹	130	1	1.5	15	15
✓ Stonyfield Organic Lowfat ¹	110	1	2	6	15
Activia (4 oz.) ¹	90	1	2	4	10
✓✓ Ratio Protein ¹	170	1.5	0	25	35
✓✓ Chobani Complete ¹	120	1.5	0	15	10
✓ Fage BestSelf Greek ¹	110	1.5	0.5	12	10
✓ Siggi's 2% Skyr—except Coconut ¹	120	1.5	1	14	15
✓ Chobani Less Sugar 2% Greek ¹	120	1.5	1	12	10
✓ YQ Protein Coconut	120	1.5	1.5	15	10
✓ Fage Total 2% Greek fruit split cup ¹	120	1.5	1.5	12	10
✓ YQ Protein Mango	130	1.5	2	15	10
✓ Chobani Fruit on the Bottom 2% Greek ¹	130	1.5	2	11	10
✓ Chobani Greek Yogurt with Oatmeal Apple Spice	140	1.5	2	10	10
YQ Protein—except Coconut or Mango ¹	130	1.5	2.5	15	10
GoodBelly Probiotics ¹	130	1.5	2.5	11	8
Chobani Greek Yogurt with Oatmeal—except Apple Spice ¹	150	1.5	2.5	10	10
Fage Total 2% Greek honey split cup	180	1.5	6	12	10

Calories
Sat Fat (g)
Added Sugar (tsp)
Protein (g)
Calcium (% DV)

✓ Nounós 2% Greek—Mixed Berry, Strawberry Vanilla, or Vanilla Bean ¹	130	2	1.5	14	10
Chobani Blended 2% Greek ¹	140	2	2.5	11	10
Chobani Blended Whole Milk Greek ¹	150	2.5	2.5	11	10
Oikos Blended Greek ¹	150	2.5	3	11	10
Siggi's 4% Cream-Skyr (4.4 oz.) ¹	130	3	1	12	10
Icelandic Provisions 1.5% Skyr Coconut	150	3	1.5	15	15
Siggi's 2% Skyr Coconut	130	3	1.5	14	10
Chobani Flip Greek ¹	190	3	3.5	10	10
Fage Total 5% Greek fruit split cup ¹	150	4.5	1.5	11	10
Noosa Greek ¹	170	4.5	2	12	15
Icelandic Provisions Krimi Skyr (4.4 oz.) ¹	160	5	1.5	11	10
Ratio Keto Friendly ¹	200	6	0 ^s	15	10
The Greek Gods Less Sugar Greek Style (4.5 oz.) ¹	140	6	0.5	6	15
Siggi's Triple Cream (4 oz.) ¹	170	6	1	9	10
Noosa Mates (5.8 oz.) ¹	290	7	4.5	9	20
Noosa (8 oz.) ¹	280	8	4.5	11	30

Plant-based, plain or unsweet (5.3 oz., unless noted)

Kite Hill Almond Milk Plain Unsweetened	120	0.5	0	4	4
✓ Silk Soy Plain (6 oz.)	110	0.5	1	7	20
Kite Hill Almond Milk Plain	140	0.5	1	4	4
Almond Breeze Original	140	0.5	2.5	3	10
✓✓ Kite Hill Almond Milk Greek Style Unsweetened ¹	160	1	0	11	10
✓✓ Silk Almondmilk Unsweet Vanilla (6 oz.)	180	1	0	6	10
Silk Almondmilk Plain	170	1	1	5	10
Oatly Oatgurt Plain	160	1	1.5	3	15
So Delicious Coconutmilk Plain	110	4	2	1	20

Plant-based, flavored (5.3 oz.)

Activia Dairy Free Almondmilk ¹	120	0	2	5	4
Silk Soy ¹	130	0	3	6	15
Almond Breeze ¹	140	0	3.5	2	10
Oatly Oatgurt ¹	170	0.5	2.5	3	10
Kite Hill Almond Milk ¹	150	0.5	3	3	4
Stonyfield Organic Dairy Free Soy ¹	140	0.5	5	6	8
Almond Breeze, with mix-ins ¹	190	1	3	4	10
Chobani Oat ¹	130	1	3.5	6	0
Silk Almondmilk ¹	180	1	3.5	5	10
Chobani Oat, with mix-ins ¹	190	2	3.5	7	0
Silk Oat Yeah Oatmilkgurt ¹	120	2.5	2	3	10
Silk Almondmilk, with mix-ins ¹	260	3	4	6	10
So Delicious Coconutmilk ¹	130	3.5	3.5	1	15
Forager Project Organic Greek Style ¹	170	4.5	2	6	2
Kite Hill Blissful Coconut Milk ¹	140	6	3.5	1	25
Siggi's Plant-Based Coconut Blend ¹	180	7	1.5	10	0
Chobani Coconut ¹	160	8	2	1	0

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ¹ Average of the entire line or the varieties listed. ^s Contains acesulfame potassium and/or sucralose.

Daily Values (DVs): Saturated Fat: 20 grams. **Protein:** 50 grams. **Calcium:** 1,300 milligrams. **Added Sugar:** 50 grams (12 tsp.).
Note: To convert teaspoons of added sugar to grams, multiply by 4.2.

Source: company information. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.



FOOD FIND

Eggstraordinary



“Made from plants (not chickens),” says the **JUST Folded Plant Eggs** package.

The main ingredient? Mung bean protein isolate. The sunny hue? Turmeric and carrot. The taste? Eggy, indeed.

We found it tricky to match the texture of scrambled eggs using JUST’s bottled liquid eggs. But its precooked frozen folded eggs take care of that for you.

Each 100-calorie “plant egg” supplies 7 grams of bean protein plus healthy fats from canola oil,

with just half a gram of saturated fat. One large chicken egg—before you season or sauté it—has 70 calories, 6 grams of protein, 1½ grams of sat fat, and two-thirds of a day’s cholesterol (the plant egg has none).

The downside: JUST’s 300 milligrams of sodium dwarfs an unseasoned chicken egg’s 65 mg. So does its price (around \$5 for four).

“You can heat it in a toaster, microwave, oven or skillet, but our chefs swear by a classic pop-up toaster,” says JUST’s [website](#).

No argument there. Then just stuff the patty into a whole wheat English muffin or tortilla. Or halve it into two triangles and nestle atop avocado toast. Or chop into small strips or cubes to mix into veggie fried rice or cauliflower “rice.”

Still feel like scrambling? Try our Dish of the Month: an eggcellent tofu recipe from Healthy Cook Kate Sherwood.

Rise and shine!

[ju.st](#)—(844) 423-6637

Photos: Lindsay Moyer/CSPI (top left), The Hershey Company (top right), Kate Sherwood/CSPI (bottom).

FOOD FAIL



Save It, Reese’s



“The Reese’s brand is here to save your morning with new **Reese’s Snack Cakes**, a first-of-its-kind, mid-morning cake treat by the Reese’s brand you love,” gushed Hershey’s [press release](#).

“We wanted to create the perfect treat for Reese’s fans to satisfy that mid-morning sweet tooth. We know that sometimes you just don’t want to wait until lunch—that’s how Reese’s Snack Cakes were born!”

Golly.

How did we ever get through the morning without 380 calories’ worth of sugar, cocoa butter, chocolate, skim milk, milk fat, lactose, lecithin, peanuts, palm and palm kernel oil, wheat flour, glycerin, corn syrup,

partially defatted peanuts, dextrose, tapioca starch, corn syrup solids, xanthan gum, artificial flavor, TBHQ, and some dozen other ingredients?

And how did we ever manage to make it to lunch without snacking on more than half a day’s added sugars (7½ teaspoons) and saturated fat (11 grams)?

Two two-packs of Reese’s Butter Cup candies (420 calories) pack just 40 more calories than *one* two-pack of Snack Cakes (380).

“Now you can indulge in a Reese’s treat any time of day,” said the press release.

“Consider morning officially saved. #NotSorry.”

Of course you’re not, Reese’s.

[hersheys.com/reeses](#)—(800) 468-1714



DISH of the month

Southwest Tofu Scramble

Sauté 1 each diced onion and bell pepper in 2 Tbs. olive oil until browned. Stir in ¼ tsp. each chili powder, smoked paprika, and salt, plus 14 oz. crumbled firm tofu. Sauté until hot and fragrant. Serves 4.

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

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