

Label Reading made Easy(er)



health on purpose

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Holistic Health Solutions Tailored to You

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Food and drug companies use many marketing ploys to sell us on their products. Some of which are meaningless, some absurd, and some bought and paid for.

Of course, the food that is healthiest does not have a label. If you are eating packaged foods, stick to those with 5 ingredients or less on the label.

Listed below are some other things to watch out for and what some of these health claims mean, if anything.

NON GMO

In my opinion, this is one of our most important labels. I watch for it like a hawk. GMO stands for Genetically Modified Organism. At this time in Canada, 4 crops are genetically modified; corn, soy, canola, and sugar.

The problem with GMO foods is not only in the seed (which has been genetically modified to be resistant to pests AND the wicked fertilizer that's sprayed on it — think the stuff of Agent Orange) but in the pesticides that must be sprayed on the crops and is now sprayed on other crops (such as wheat) so that they ripen faster. Commonly referred to as Round Up, Glyphosate is poison. End of story.

For my family, the non-GMO label is something that we search for AND a question that we ask farmers at farm stands. MANY local farmers in our area are using GMO corn seeds and Glyphosate on their crops.

Speaking of **CORN**, a very small percentage of the corn that is grown here is actually consumed by humans. Most (about 80%) is used for ethanol and for animal feed. A little miracle of our modern-day farming is that with all of this excess corn, we can now make High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) and put it in everything. HFCS shuts off the part of your brain that tells you you're full AND it's subsidized by our government. Corn receives more subsidies than any other crop and uses more of our natural resources too. It's also landing more people smack dab in the middle of our health care system with diabetes, obesity, hyperactivity, anxiety and depression, cardiovascular disease, etc.



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SUGAR

Sugar goes by many names on a label. In fact, there are over 50 different names for sugar, going far beyond HFCS. To know how many teaspoons of sugar are in a serving, simply divide the number of grams by 4. One tsp. of sugar = 4 grams on the label. Your favourite snack sized yogurt container may have 19 grams of sugar or almost 5 tsp.!

SODIUM

Should read 400mg/serving or less

FIBRE AND PROTEIN

The more, the better!

My motto in all things health is this:
Follow the money.

For example, the Heart Health Check is a symbol that is purchased, not earned. Any company can come along (margarine, anyone?) and claim to be heart-healthy with enough dollars behind them.

You'll also find claims from the Diabetes Association on some packaged foods that they have no business recommending.

The most important question you can ask is this: *"Who's paying for this?"*

SERVING SIZE

Always check the serving size on a label. Companies will make the serving size super small so that a product will appear healthier than it is.

TRANS FATS

This is the stuff that clogs your arteries, gives you brain fog, anxiety and other mental health issues, etc.

.5 grams or less can legally carry a nice little sticker on the package that says: Zero Trans Fats — which is a LIE. This is where making the serving size smaller comes in handy. Watch for PHO, hydrogenated oils, trans fats in the ingredients listing.

FAT FREE

We need fat in our diet. Healthy fats are important to the health of our skin, our brain (the brain is 65% fat), cardiovascular health, maintaining our weight, hormone balance, and even cholesterol. When the fat is removed, sugar and salt have to go into the product or it would taste like cardboard. You're better with healthy fats than the replacement.

FREE RANGE

This label simply means that the hens had the opportunity to be exposed to the outdoors and that they are not kept in cages. Outdoor exposure is not guaranteed or monitored.



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LIGHT

This could mean flavour, colour, anything.

MADE WITH REAL FRUIT

There are zero guidelines for this one.

CHOLESTROL FREE

In many cases this is irrelevant, as only animal products contain cholesterol.

SUGAR FREE

This is HUGE. Many products that are sugar free contain Aspartame which is a neurotoxin (affecting the brain). It also seems to have an affinity to the joints and has been proven to increase appetite. This stuff is POISON. The food listed as sugar free may also contain sugar alcohols which are safe for most but wreak havoc on anyone with digestive issues such as IBS, Chrons, etc.

NO SUGAR ADDED

The product can still contain Maltodextrin (glucose), HFCS, and naturally occurring sugars.

Multigrain and dark breads get their colour from caramel colouring. Look for whole grains or sprouted grains NON-GMO.



ALL NATURAL

This is a completely bogus claim. Many things that are not good for us are all natural. HFCS is a natural substance. This label means that there are no added colours or synthetics in the package.

NATURAL FLAVOURINGS

The FDA has a long definition stating what can be labeled as a natural flavour — much of it is not food — for example: Castoreum is a bitter, orange-brown, odoriferous, oily secretion, found in two sacs between the anus and the external genitals of beavers. This is a natural flavouring. And it's in your food.

VITAMINS

This is a wash. The RDA is so low that it's a joke for companies to claim added vitamins as a selling feature. For example, the RDA for Vitamin C is just enough that you won't get Ricketts. Labeling added vitamins can be used as a marketing ploy to sell more stuff.

GLUTEN FREE

Often times this is glorified junk food. If you are looking to eat a gluten free diet, look to whole foods and not something that comes in a package or make the switch to a gluten free grain. Buy quinoa pasta instead of the one that's labeled as gluten free.



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OMEGA 3

You know the egg cartons that say "Source of Omega 3's". All that means is that the chicken was given a bit of flax seed. Huh.

ORGANIC

95% less or less harmful pesticides were used to grow this product or it contains 70% organic ingredients. It should be noted that Monsanto (the Godfather of all things GMO'd) is now buying up Organic food companies left, right and centre. Buyer beware. Yes, there are times when organic is a great idea. Chances are that your local, backyard farmer who is not certified organic is using organic procedures.

Some of the additives you'll want to stay away from:

Food Dyes – most are listed as E numbers.

Blue 1 and 2 = E133

Red 40 = E124

Yellow 6 = E110

Yellow Tartrazine = E102

All are banned in European countries because they are known to cause brain and behavioral issues, disrupt hormones, and to be cancer causing. They are widely used here in energy drinks, cereals, packaged mac and cheese, etc.



MSG

This is an excitotoxin that causes neurological damage.

NITRATES

Known carcinogen in the body. Found in lunch meats and other cured meats and directly linked to cancer.

POTASSIUM BROMATE

Used to fluff breads.

SULFUR DIOXIDE

Now banned by FDA for use in soda, beer, juice but still sprayed on fresh fruits and vegetables.

SULFUR ADDITIVES

Listed as E2220.

SULFITES

Listed as E2221 — found in wine, dried fruits, etc.

BHA and BHT

This is a neurotoxin. It is especially harmful for the brains of children. It's added to chips, cereals, gum, and jello. BHA and BHT had been banned from children's cereals so now companies put it in the packaging. Clever, don't you think?

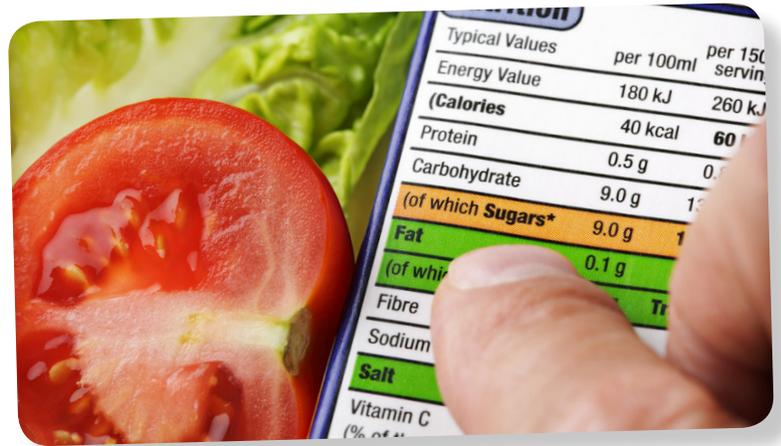


XANTHUM GUM

Generally regarded as harmless. This is an alternative to glutenous thickener. It's made of fermented bacteria and alcohol.

CARRAGEENAN

A thickener derived from red seaweed, carrageenan has been linked to insulin resistance and inflammation. It's approved for use in infant formulas here and is used in many foods and personal hygiene products. It is banned in Europe.



To re-iterate, the best foods for you will be those without a label. Eat a whole foods diet as often as you can, and know what to watch for when you do need to consume packaged foods.

Be an informed consumer!



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