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HALF-BAKED NEWS BITES



WRINKLES
What works

The best
yogurts

100 calories of
snacks



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HALF-BAKED NEWS BITES

BY BONNIE LIEBMAN

Another day, another news flash. Never mind that the details may come straight from a press release designed to grab eyeballs. Are the results preliminary? Unpublished? Inconsistent with better research? Industry funded? Odds are, you'd never know it.

“While being in a relationship has many advantages, it turns out there’s an unhealthy downside, as well,” reported [Foxnews.com](#) in March.

“According to a new study, which analyzed over a decade’s worth of data from more than 15,000 adults, couples are more likely to gain weight than those who are single,” said Fox, citing an article in the British tabloid *The Sun*.

[Newsweek](#) went further. “People in relationships gain weight because they don’t care about their looks,” it declared.

Whoa. Did anyone bother to read the study?

It looked at ten phone surveys done in Australia between 2005 and 2014.¹ Each was a “snapshot” in time, so it said nothing about whether people gained weight over time, or why.



Instead, the study simply found that fewer couples than singles were normal weight. Could that be because singles

underestimated their weight? Did heavier people gain weight before or after becoming a couple? The study couldn't say.

“When couples don’t need to look attractive and slim to attract a partner, they may feel more comfortable in eating more, or eating more foods high in fat and sugar,” said the study’s lead author, according to Foxnews.com.

How did that possible explanation—one of several the authors suggested—turn into a cause of weight gain?

Ask Fox and *Newsweek*.

Bottom Line: This study offers no good evidence that getting into a relationship leads to weight gain.

¹ [PLoS ONE 2018. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0192584.](#)



The “researchers analyzed 32 randomized control [sic] trials of about 2,500 people who ate a low glycemic index (GI) diet, consuming pasta instead of other forms of carbohydrates.”

(Low-GI carbs don’t cause a rapid rise in blood sugar.)

The results: “The participants ate about 3.3 servings of about a half cup of pasta on average each week. Over 12 weeks, they lost

A new study published in the journal *BMJ Open* might change dieters’ views of pasta, reported [Women’s Health](#) in April.

“Researchers found that people actually *lost weight* while eating pasta,” said the magazine’s website.

a little more than a pound on average.”

Where to begin?

First, 21 of the 32 studies had no idea how much pasta people ate.¹ And the remaining 11 studies only reported how often people ate pasta, not how much. (Food labels use a one-cup serving of pasta, but many restaurants serve 3 to 4 cups in an entrée. So where did the half-cup serving come from? The press release that accompanied the study.)

Women’s Health eventually got around to explaining the biggest flaw: “The researchers point out in their conclusion that eating pasta as part of a low GI diet is likely what helped these people lose weight—not the pasta alone.” Do low-GI diets help people shed pounds? That’s debatable.

But why did the researchers even bother assessing the “effect of pasta in the context of low-glycemic index dietary patterns”? Kudos to [BuzzFeed News](#) for digging into that question: “Three of the scientists behind the study in question had financial conflicts as tangled as a bowl of spaghetti, including ties to the world’s largest pasta company, the Barilla Group.”

Bottom Line: Pasta is no magic weight-loss bullet.

¹ [BMJ Open 2018. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2017-019438.](#)

“Couples who eat at least two portions of seafood a week have more sex and get pregnant faster, a study found,” announced the [New York Post](#) in May in an article reprinted from the British tabloid *The Sun*.

[Newsweek](#), the [New York Times](#), [Prevention](#), [Reuters](#), and others also ran the irresistible story. But none had so few caveats.

The *Post* leapt straight to an explanation: “Researchers say the protein-rich food boosts men and women’s sex drive and improves the quality of their sperm and eggs.” Couples were “39 percent more likely to have sex on days when they had both eaten seafood, such as fish or oysters.”

But when only the man or woman ate seafood, they were no more likely to have sex than when neither did.¹ If seafood were such a strong aphrodisiac, wouldn’t you expect some uptick in odds if only one person had, say, a tuna sandwich?

Of the 501 couples—all trying to conceive—“92 percent of the frequent seafood eaters had gotten pregnant within one year,” noted the *Post*. “But only 79 percent of the other group had



conceived.” (“Frequent” meant at least eight servings per month.)

Yes, but could something other than the seafood have been responsible?

“Individuals with higher seafood intake could have healthier diets overall, which we were unable to account for in the present study,” wrote the researchers.

“Couples who consume greater amounts of seafood together may share more meals and thus more time together (including nights), which might explain the association between sexual activity and subsequently fecundity,” they cautioned.

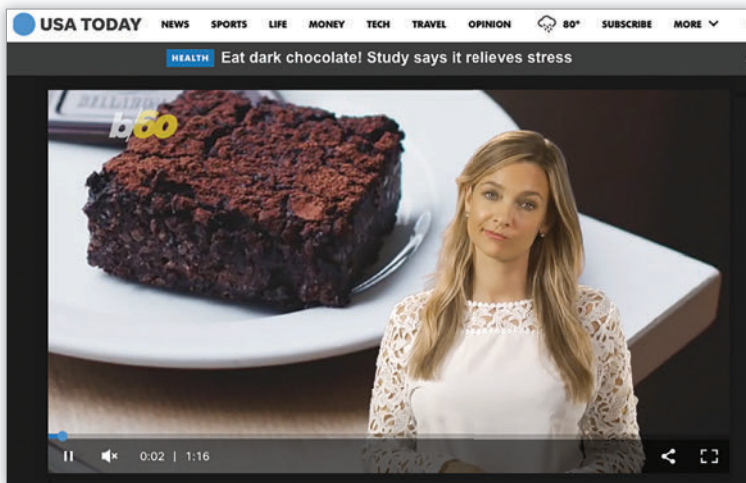
Neither factor would fully explain the links, said the scientists. And they cited other

evidence that seafood or its omega-3 fats boosts fertility.

But at least they acknowledged uncertainties. Not the *Post*.

Bottom Line: Aim for two or three servings of seafood a week to protect your heart. Pick low-mercury fish like salmon or sardines, especially if you’re pregnant or trying to be.

¹ [J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab. 103: 2680, 2018.](#)



“Blood tests revealed the chocolate influenced gene activity, increased anti-inflammatory agents and increased infection-fighting cells, Berk said,” reported *USA Today*. “Gamma waves recorded by an electroencephalogram (EEG) suggested the treat could positively impact brain function, such as cognitive function and creativity, even two hours after eating it.”

So the study never measured stress, inflammation, mood, memory, or immunity—just brain waves and gene activity.

USA Today did get around to noting that “the two studies included a total of 10 participants and results have not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal for scrutiny.”

Yup. One study had just five people and no control group (people who got no chocolate). The other had four people who got chocolate and one control (who got none).

How did two unpublished pilot studies make headlines? Loma Linda’s glowing news release had to help.

Oh, yeah. The test chocolate was made by [Parliament Chocolate](#), which is co-owned by Lee Berk’s son Ryan. Sheesh.

Bottom Line: A large clinical trial (COSMOS) is testing a supplement with cocoa flavanols (600 milligrams a day) on heart disease, stroke, and memory. Even if it helps, you’d have to eat some 600 calories’ worth of dark chocolate a day to get that much.

¹ [fasebj.org/doi/10.1096/fasebj.2018.32.1_supplement.878.10.](#)

² [fasebj.org/doi/10.1096/fasebj.2018.32.1_supplement.755.1.](#)

“Dark chocolate with high concentrations of cacao can have positive effects on stress levels, inflammation, mood, memory and immunity, according to two new studies,” reported [USA Today](#) in April.

Wow. What *doesn’t* dark chocolate do?

[Real Simple](#) magazine went further. “People who eat more chocolate are less stressed, according to science,” it declared.

The participants in the two studies—led by Lee Berk of Loma Linda University—ate 48 grams of dark chocolate a day.^{1,2} (A Hershey’s Special Dark bar weighs 41 grams...and has 200 calories.)

“A new study exonerates dairy fats as a cause of early death, even as low-fat products continue to be misperceived as healthier,” *The Atlantic* reported in July.

“An analysis of 2,907 adults found that people with higher and lower levels of dairy fats in their blood had the same rate of death during a 22-year period. The implication is that it didn’t matter if people drank whole or skim or 2-percent milk, ate butter versus margarine, etc.”

Since when is an “implication” enough to “exonerate” anything?

For starters, this kind of study can’t prove cause and effect.

It looked for a link between dairy fats in blood and the risk of heart disease, stroke, or death.¹ But it couldn’t rule out the possibility that people with lower dairy fat levels were different from those with higher levels.

For example, people with lower levels drank more alcohol, had bigger waists, and were more likely to have type 2 diabetes and be treated for high blood pressure. The authors accounted for those



differences, but they couldn’t account for differences they didn’t know about.

One example: Were people who were eating more dairy more likely to start taking statins to lower their cholesterol over the 22-year study? The authors didn’t say.

Another key question: Were people with lower dairy-fat levels eating less

dairy and more chips, pretzels, soda, cookies, cupcakes, or other sweets or white flour? The authors didn’t say.

The lead investigator “believes that this evidence is not itself a reason to eat more or less dairy,” noted *The Atlantic*. “But she said it could encourage people to give priority to whole-fat dairy products over those that may be lower in fat but higher in sugar, which may be added to make up for a lack of taste or texture.”

Tip: Low-fat dairy doesn’t necessarily have more sugar than high-fat. There’s plenty to choose from (see “Culture Wars,” p. 13).

Bottom Line: Replacing saturated fats (like those in dairy and meat) with unsaturated fats (like those in nuts, fatty fish, and most oils) lowers the risk of heart disease. And that’s based on numerous studies, including randomized clinical trials.^{2,3}

¹ *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 2018. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqy117.
² *Cochrane Database Syst. Rev.* 2015. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD011737.
³ *Heart* 101: 1938. 2015.

“Women who had three or more children were less likely to develop dementia than women who had only one child, [researchers] found,” reported *NBC News* in July.

“And women who had miscarriages were more likely to develop dementia as well.”

Holy cow!

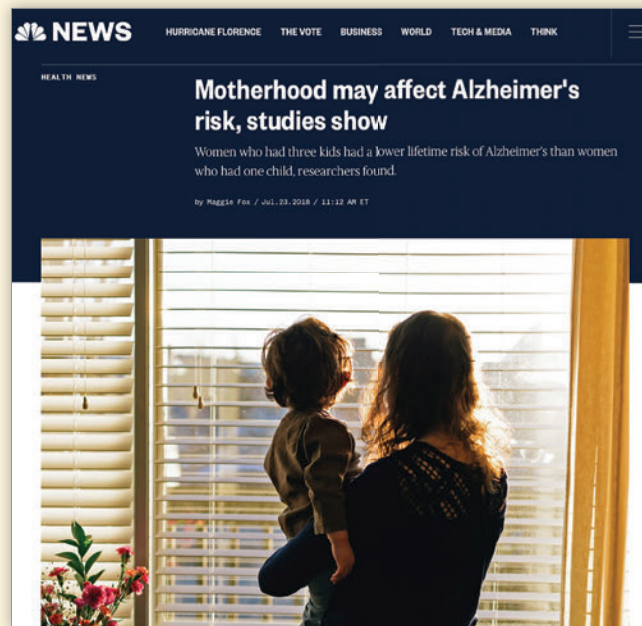
The findings were presented at the annual Alzheimer’s Association conference in Chicago.¹ The study hasn’t been published, but that didn’t stop NBC from speculating on what could explain the links.

“It could be hormones,” Heather Snyder, senior director of medical and scientific operations at the Alzheimer’s Association, told the network.

“Or you can think about women with three children. They are multitasking a lot.”

“That could build up what are called brain reserves,” explained NBC.

Hmm... Does Snyder have data



showing that a woman’s number of children is a proxy for multitasking?

“Or it could have something to do with the immune system, which changes during pregnancy, or even the way a woman eats when she is pregnant,” said NBC, which never pointed out that

something else about women who have three or more children could explain their lower risk.

And only later in the story did NBC report the difference in risk: 12 percent lower for women who had at least three children and 9 percent higher for each miscarriage. Not huge.

Want to know if women who had *two* children had a lower risk than those who had one? (Answer: No.) NBC didn’t say.

But the report didn’t stop there. “It might not be that having more children is better, however,” said the network. “Last week, a team in South Korea found that women who had five or more children had a higher risk of Alzheimer’s.”

Oh, for heaven’s sake.

Bottom Line: It’s too early to know if pregnancies or miscarriages affect a woman’s risk of dementia.

¹ alz.org/aaic/downloads2018/Mon-am-briefing-women-dementia-risk.pdf

“Eat dinner earlier, dodge cancer?” ran the [ABC News](#) headline in July.

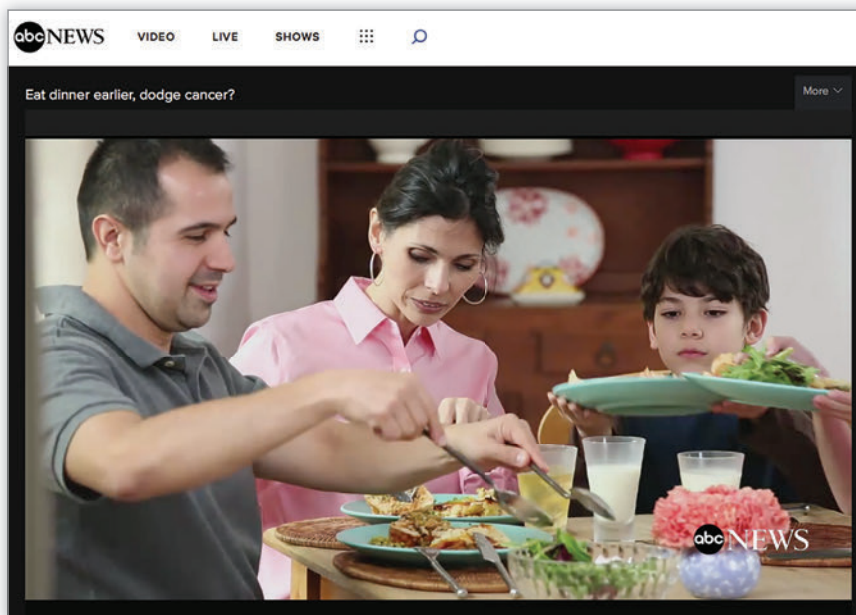
“In a new study published in *The International Journal of Cancer*, researchers noted that late night eating is associated with multiple different poor health outcomes, including cancer risk.” Yikes.

“Men who report eating dinner at least two hours before going to sleep had a 26 percent decrease in prostate cancer compared to those eating immediately before bed,” said ABC.

“Women with the same dining pattern had a 16 percent decrease in breast cancer.”

But how many Americans swallow that last bite and jump right into their jammies? And even if you do, ABC neglected to mention that the 16 percent lower risk of breast cancer wasn’t statistically significant—so the risk *wasn’t* necessarily lower.¹

“People who had dinner before 9:00 p.m. had a 25 percent



decrease in prostate cancer and a 15 percent decrease in breast cancer compared to people who had dinner after 10:00 p.m.,” noted ABC.

Those differences weren’t statistically significant either.

What’s more, something else about the late diners could explain their higher risk. That’s especially true in this kind of study, which asked people with or without cancer how soon after dinner

they went to bed years earlier.

Maybe current fatigue or depression made cancer patients more likely to recall hitting the sack earlier.

Bottom Line: Until we know more, don’t worry that late dinners cause cancer.

¹ [Int. J. Cancer 2018. doi:10.1002/ijc.31649.](#)



“An egg a day may be the key to preventing cardiovascular disease in adults, a study of almost half a million people suggests,” reported

[U.S. News](#) in May.

“The study published Monday in the journal *Heart* found people who ate one egg per day were 18 percent less likely

to die from cardiovascular disease, compared to adults who did not consume eggs.”

(Since when is something linked to a modest 18 percent lower risk “the key” to preventing any disease?)

Too bad *U.S. News* didn’t mention that the study was done in China, where people eat fewer animal foods (eggs, meat, and dairy) than we do.¹ (Only 13 percent of the participants ate an egg a day.)

[CNN](#) was better at explaining the study’s limitations.

“The research team collected only ‘crude information’ about egg consumption from participants,” it noted.

“We should [also] be cautious when interpreting our results in a context of different dietary and lifestyle characteristics from China,” said Canqing Yu, associate

professor in the Peking University School of Public Health and study co-author, according to CNN.

In fact, the Chinese study found no lower risk of heart disease among egg eaters who were obese, which applies to more than a third of American adults.

One more problem: In earlier studies, egg eaters with diabetes had a *higher* risk of heart disease. The Chinese study excluded people with diabetes.

Could something else about those who ate no eggs explain their higher risk? This kind of study can’t say.

Bottom Line: Stick to no more than four or five egg yolks a week (see June 2015, p. 11). 🍳

¹ [Heart 2018. doi:10.1136/heartjnl-2017-312651.](#)

100 CALORIES

How snacks stack up

BY JENNIFER URBAN

Here's 100 calories' worth of a dozen snacks. You'll fill up on more food with fresh—not dried—fruits or veggies. (Don't like your veggies plain? Add a 35-calorie tablespoon or two of hummus.) 🥕



Almonds
14 NUTS



KIND Bar
½ BAR



Cucumbers
6 CUPS



Grape Tomatoes
4 CUPS



Triscuits
5 CRACKERS



Trail Mix
2 TABLESPOONS



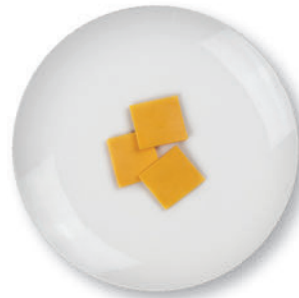
Strawberries
15 LARGE



Apple
1 MEDIUM



Dark Chocolate
1½ SQUARES



Cheddar Cheese
3 CRACKER CUTS



Blueberries
¼ CUPS



Baby Carrots
2 CUPS



Ironing out the Wrinkles

The do's and don't bother's of anti-aging skincare

BY CAITLIN DOW

"Rejuvenate." "Restore." "Brighten." Skincare companies use vague buzzwords to imply that their elixirs, potions, serums, and "cosmeceuticals" are the fountain of youth. But the evidence is often absent, weak, or funded by manufacturers.

What Causes Wrinkles

"The skin on the backside of an 80-year-old doesn't look that different than the skin on the backside of a 20-year-old," says Gary Fisher, a professor in the department of dermatology at the University of Michigan Medical School.

That's because the main cause of wrinkled skin isn't your age. It's exposure to the sun.

"Ultraviolet radiation from the sun causes a wound-healing response in the skin, even though there's no open wound," notes Fisher.

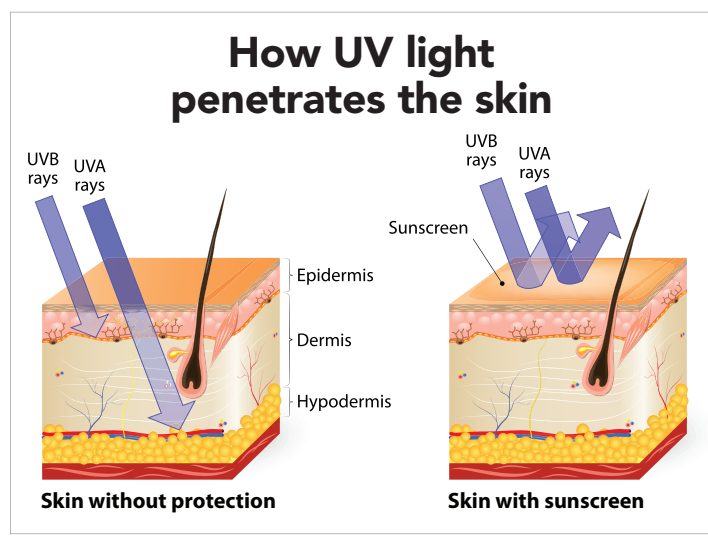
"Part of the response is inflammation, which leads to collagen breakdown. Over time, the damage from those repeated UV insults accumulates to the point that the skin's appearance changes."

And those changes are not just cosmetic.

"With photoaging, you get deep wrinkles and irregular pigmentation, plus lesions that may lead to skin cancer," explains Erica Stevens, a dermatologist also at the University of Michigan Medical School.

"Photoaging is not nearly as prevalent in people with dark complexions," she

says. That's because they have more melanin—a dark brown or black pigment in the skin, hair, and eyes—than people with lighter skin color.



UVB and UVA rays damage skin, though UVA penetrates deeper. Broad spectrum sunscreens filter both.

Sun exposure creates more melanin—that's what makes you tan. But don't expect a tan to protect your skin if you're fair-skinned.

"A tan is a sign of damage," says Stevens. "It's essentially your skin's response to the UV damage by trying to protect itself."

You can also thank your genes and years of squinting, smiling, and frowning

for wrinkles. Smoking is to blame, too. That said, here's what you can do to help keep your skin looking young.

How to Avoid Sun Damage

The best way to prevent UV damage is to avoid the sun by seeking shade or wearing a wide-brimmed hat and protective clothing.

Tightly woven fabrics like denim, wool, and polyester provide more UV protection than looser-woven fabrics like linen and most cotton.

"You can also look for clothing with a UPF"—ultraviolet protection factor—"label, which tells you how much UV light is filtered out," says Stevens. For example, an item that's rated UPF 50 lets through just 1/50th of the sun's UV light.

And UV-blocking sunglasses can protect your eyelids from skin cancer (and lower your risk of cataracts). Look for sunglasses labeled UV400 or for ones that block at least 99 percent of UV rays.

When shade or clothing won't cut it, sunscreen is the next best thing.

Some tips:
■ **Look for SPF 30 or higher.** "You want to aim for an SPF—or sun protection factor—of at least 30," says Stevens. SPF 15 blocks 93 percent of

Photo: Photo50/stock.adobe.com. Illustration: designua/stock.adobe.com

MOISTURIZERS



Moisturizers relieve dryness, but don't smooth wrinkles.

UVB rays (which cause sunburns, skin cancer, and photodamage). SPF 30 blocks 97 percent.

"You can get small increases in protection as you go from SPF 30 to 50 to 70, but the effect is slight."

■ **Use a broad spectrum sunscreen.** "We used to think that only UVB rays caused damage, but now we know that UVA also plays a role," notes Stevens.

UVA penetrates deeper into the skin and is a chief culprit in photoaging.²

Your best bet: a "broad spectrum" sunscreen, which protects against UVA and UVB rays. (Unfortunately, there's no SPF rating system for UVA, so you don't know how much protection you're getting.)

■ **Apply often.** "If you're in the sun, you should reapply sunscreen every two hours," says Stevens.

And most of us don't use nearly enough. "If most of your body is exposed to the sun, use about an ounce, or a shot glass worth, of sunscreen." If you use less, you'll get less protection. "Based on typical usage, someone using an SPF 70 may only get the equivalent of SPF 40."

If you'll be sweating or in water, opt for water resistant sunscreens, which last for 40 to 80 minutes.

Stevens also recommends sunscreen for people with dark skin. "You do have some natural protection thanks to

melanin, but folks with darker skin can and do get skin cancer."

■ **Do it year round.** UVB is more intense in the summer, at higher elevations, and in locations closer to the equator.

"A lot of my older patients complain of dry, itchy skin," says University of Michigan dermatologist Erica Stevens. That's because skin loses its volume over time, so it gets thinner and drier.

Moisturizers relieve dryness by

helping the skin retain water. "That decreases the risk of tearing the skin if you're scratching because it's dry," explains Stevens. (Torn skin increases the risk of infection.)

"But moisturizers don't smooth out wrinkles," she notes. "They just get rid of dryness and flakiness, which can make the skin look nicer."

Don't count on most ingredients that are added to moisturizers to banish wrinkles, either:

■ **Hyaluronic acid.** "It's a naturally occurring molecule that holds onto moisture inside the skin and plumps up the skin," says the University of Southern California's Marcel Nimni. "But it's a huge molecule, so it doesn't get through the skin."

That means that creams and lotions with hyaluronic acid retain moisture on the skin's surface, but they won't have any long-lasting effect on the texture or smoothness of the skin.

■ **Vitamin C.** It's necessary for building the collagen that gives skin its structure. Just don't expect much from serums and moisturizers.

"Vitamin C is pretty unstable," says Stevens, except at a low pH. So if the moisturizer isn't acidic, the vitamin C is often inactive by the time it reaches your skin. Or it may be bound to a stabilizing compound that doesn't permeate skin.¹ (No studies have looked at taking vitamin C to reduce wrinkles, but it's unlikely to help.)

■ **Other ingredients.** "There are so many cosmeceuticals added to moisturizers, and it's almost impossible to know whether they do what companies claim or how much is actually in a product," says Stevens.

"They're not like drugs. They don't undergo rigorous testing, and almost all of the research is industry driven. You'd be hard-pressed to find any hard science for most of them."

Her bottom line? "Use anything you like that feels good on your skin. There's no reason to pay \$100 for a moisturizer when you can use something basic from CVS."

¹ *J. Cosmet. Dermatol.* 11: 310, 2012.

But UVA rays account for roughly 95 percent of UV radiation. And UVA intensity doesn't vary much by season, weather, or location. Nor is UVA blocked by glass.²

"If your skin is exposed to daylight, I always advocate for wearing sunscreen, even on cloudy days and in the winter," says Stevens.

Concerned that you won't make enough vitamin D if you cover up and use sunscreen? You can always take a vitamin D supplement.

Retinoids

In 1995, the Food and Drug Administration approved creams and lotions with tretinoin to lessen wrinkles and dark spots on skin. Tretinoin is a retinoid, one of a class of compounds related to vitamin A (retinol).

"The anti-aging effects of retinoids involve stimulating collagen production," says Fisher.

And collagen matters.

"Most of the skin's mass is collagen, a structural protein that acts as a scaffold," explains Marcel Nimni, an emeritus professor at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California.

Most people make less—and break down

more—collagen as they get older.

Even worse, "photodamage creates an environment in the skin that causes the

COLLAGEN

“Our line of beauty-specific products support the skin’s moisture, improving the elasticity, tone and vibrance,” promises [Vital Proteins](#), which sells collagen powder.

The rationale: since fine lines, wrinkles, and skin thinness are mostly due to losing collagen, why not just eat collagen?

“It’s like a story from the Dark Ages,” says the University of Southern California’s Marcel Nimni (who literally wrote the book on collagen). “If you want to be smart, eat brain. If you want courage, eat heart. If you want to be beautiful, eat collagen.”

But it’s not that simple.

“When we eat collagen, our gut breaks it down into amino acids, just like any other protein,” explains Nimni.

In other words, your body doesn’t shuttle intact collagen to your skin. Nor can you direct the amino acids from the



collagen you eat to build more collagen in your skin.

What’s more, “there’s only one amino acid—hydroxyproline—that’s found in collagen that’s special,” says Nimni. That is, it’s found in only a few proteins, and it’s essential for giving collagen its strength.

“But we’ve known for 60 years that your body cannot use hydroxyproline from the diet to build collagen. The body has to make hydroxyproline on its own,” Nimni explains.

“The issue is not that the skin is deficient in collagen’s building materials,” says the University of Michigan’s Gary Fisher. “It’s that the machinery to build collagen doesn’t work as well as we get older.”

Nimni’s bottom line: “This idea of eating collagen to improve your skin’s appearance is the ultimate fallacy. People are wasting their money.”

skin cells to make less collagen,” says Fisher. Retinoids override those signals.

“The additional collagen adds volume to the skin, making it smoother and reducing wrinkles. Photodamage also creates dark spots, and retinoids lighten them.”

But retinoids can cause dryness and irritation. If you want to try them, start by using a cream with a low concentration (like 0.025 percent tretinoin) just a few times a week, gradually increasing the frequency, says Stevens.

Retinoids also make the skin more sensitive to the sun. If you use a retinoid, apply it at night and wear a hat or use sunscreen during the day.

And don’t expect to look like you had a face lift. The results are subtle and take time.

“It often takes three to six months to start seeing the benefits,” notes Fisher.

Tretinoin, which requires a prescription, is available as a generic drug. And it now has competitors: Tazarotene also requires a prescription, but adapalene (which the FDA has approved only for treating acne) is sold over the counter as Differin.

“All of them are beneficial,” says Stevens. “Tazarotene causes more

dryness and irritation, so I prescribe it less often than tretinoin. Adapalene is the least irritating and most readily available, since you don’t need a prescription, though it isn’t as potent as tretinoin.”

What about over-the-counter creams with retinol?

“Retinol is metabolized in our bodies to tretinoin, which activates the pathways that lead to the skin-based benefits,” explains Fisher. But you’d need far more retinol to have the same impact.³

“Tretinoin is about ten-fold more potent than retinol,” says Fisher.

The catch: over-the-counter creams don’t have to say how much retinol they contain. (They’re cosmetics, not drugs.)

“Some may have too little to be effective, and some may have high levels that can be irritating,” notes Fisher.

What about taking vitamin A (retinol) supplements? There’s no evidence that they help. And high doses can build up and eventually cause liver damage.

“Vitamin A acts on every cell in our bodies, so if you load up, you can run into trouble,” says Fisher.

As for supplements and ingredients in moisturizers, serums, lotions, and creams that claim to have anti-aging properties: “There is unfortunately very little solid science and lots of pseudoscience about products to slow or reverse skin aging,” says Barbara Gilchrist, a dermatologist and photoaging expert at Massachusetts General Hospital.

“Tried and true: sunscreens and tretinoin.” 🍌



Want to soften those wrinkles? Try tretinoin.

¹ *Arch. Dermatol.* 138: 1462, 2002.

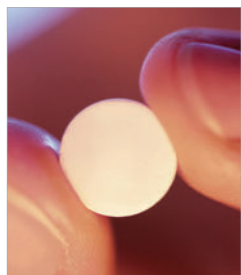
² *Exp. Dermatol.* 23 (Suppl. 1): 7, 2014.

³ *J. Cosmet. Dermatol.* 14: 40, 2015.

Quick Studies

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

An Aspirin a Day?



A low-dose daily aspirin doesn't lower the risk of dying or having a heart attack or stroke in healthy older people. In fact, it may raise the risk of bleeding or dying, especially of cancer.

Researchers randomly assigned 19,114 healthy Australian and U.S. residents aged 70 or older (65 or older for U.S. blacks and Hispanics, who have a higher risk of heart disease) to take either a daily enteric-coated aspirin (100 milligrams) or a placebo.

After nearly five years, the aspirin takers were 14 percent more likely to have died than the placebo takers and 31 percent more likely to have died of cancer, though the risk was still low: 3.1 percent of the aspirin takers died of cancer, versus 2.3 percent of the placebo takers. Surprisingly, the aspirin takers were more likely than the placebo takers to die of colorectal cancer, though those results were less certain. (Aspirin takers had a lower risk in earlier studies.)

The aspirin takers were also 38 percent more likely to suffer a "major hemorrhage" such as stomach or brain bleeding serious enough to require transfusion, hospitalization, or surgery. And the aspirin takers were no less likely to be diagnosed with heart attack, stroke, dementia, or disability.

What to do: Don't take a daily low-dose aspirin if you're 70 or older and healthy, unless your doctor says otherwise. A low-dose daily aspirin may lower the risk of a heart attack or stroke in 50-to-69-year-olds at high risk, according to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Ask your doctor.

N. Engl. J. Med. 2018. doi:[10.1056/NEJMoa1803955](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1803955), [10.1056/NEJMoa1805819](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1805819), [10.1056/NEJMoa1800722](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa1800722).

Vitamin D & Mood

Can extra vitamin D improve your mood, as some studies suggest?

New Zealand researchers randomly assigned 152 healthy women aged 18 to 40 to take either vitamin D (50,000 IU) or a placebo once a month. Each group reported their moods online.



After six months, the vitamin takers had no different depression, anxiety, or mood scores than the placebo takers.

What to do: Don't expect vitamin D to improve your mood.

J. Nutr. Sci. 2018. doi:[10.1017/jns.2018.14](https://doi.org/10.1017/jns.2018.14).

Alcohol: Unsafe at Any Dose?



How much alcohol is best for your health?

A team of scientists examined studies on 28 million people to estimate the global burden of 23 diseases and injuries due to alcohol.

The risk of heart disease was 14 percent lower for men—and 18 percent lower for women—who drank one small serving of alcohol a

day compared to those who drank none.

However, drinking even that amount each day was linked to a higher risk of many other health problems, including cancers of the breast, colon and rectum, and throat. Other outcomes—like cancer of the larynx or mouth, traffic injuries, and violence—increased at two or more small servings a day.

The estimated risks: In one year, one of the 23 outcomes would occur in 918 of 100,000 people aged 15 to 95 who had

one drink a day, versus 914 of 100,000 people who drank no alcohol—not a huge difference. But the risk climbed to 977 of 100,000 people in those who had two drinks a day.

Those results are based on global data, so they include some outcomes—tuberculosis, for example—that don't affect most Americans. And the studies didn't assign people to drink or not, so they can't prove that alcohol caused the risks or benefits.

Nevertheless, the results contradict the widespread belief—promoted by the alcohol industry—that alcohol is good for you.

"Alcohol is a colossal global health issue and small reductions in health-related harms at low levels of alcohol intake are outweighed by the increased risk of other health-related harms, including cancer," concluded an editorial published with the study.

What to do: Don't start drinking on a daily basis in order to protect your health. 🍷

Lancet 2018. doi:[10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31310-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31310-2), [10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31571-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31571-X).

The Healthy Cook

One Fish, Two Fish...



BY KATE SHERWOOD

These two fish dishes pop with flavor-packed sauces and come together in just 30 minutes. No halibut? Try cod. 🍷

Got a question or suggestion? Write to Kate at healthycook@cspinet.org.

Zesty Tomato Halibut



SERVES 4

- 2 Tbs. + 1 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 6 oz. skinless halibut fillets
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 anchovy fillets (optional)
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, diced
- 1 lemon, zested and cut in half
- 2 Tbs. flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Heat 2 Tbs. of the oil in a large non-stick pan over medium-

high heat until shimmering hot. Sauté the fish, turning once, until lightly browned and cooked through, 2-3 minutes per side. Remove from the pan.

2. Add the remaining 1 Tbs. of oil with the garlic, anchovies, and tomatoes. Cook, stirring often, for 1 minute.

3. Stir in the lemon zest and parsley. Season with the salt and pepper. Spoon over the fish. Serve with the lemon.

PER SERVING (4 oz. cooked fish with sauce): calories 270 | total fat 13 g | sat fat 2 g | carbs 4 g | fiber 1 g | total sugar 2 g | protein 32 g | sodium 310 mg



Orange-Ginger Salmon



SERVES 4

- 1 cup fresh orange juice
- 1 Tbs. minced ginger
- 2 Tbs. miso paste or reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbs. dijon mustard
- 4 6 oz. center-cut salmon fillets
- 1 scallion, minced

1. Place a foil-lined sheet pan in the oven 6 inches from the broiler. Turn on the broiler.

2. In a small pan over high heat, boil the orange juice and

ginger until reduced to a syrup, about ¼ cup. Whisk in the miso and the mustard.

3. Place the fish on the sheet pan and spoon the sauce over the fish. Return the pan to the oven. Broil until the sauce is bubbly and the fish flakes apart easily with a fork, 6-10 minutes.

4. Let the fish rest for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with the scallions.

PER SERVING (4 oz. cooked fish with sauce): calories 250 | total fat 6 g | sat fat 1.5 g | carbs 9 g | fiber 0 g | total sugar 5 g | protein 34 g | sodium 450 mg





CULTURE WARS

What's new in the yogurt aisle

BY LINDSAY MOYER & JOLENE MAFNAS

Five years ago: regular or Greek? Today: Greek or Icelandic? Almond or “cashewgurt”? Whole or “ultra-filtered” milk? With or without toppings to “flip” and mix into the tub?

The dairy aisle features a growing herd of yogurts. But it's still tricky to spot a good-tasting 'gurt that's not sugar laden. Here's our take on the latest yogurt trends...and some can't-miss newbies.

A 'Gurt Guide



Can't go wrong with plain 0% Greek.

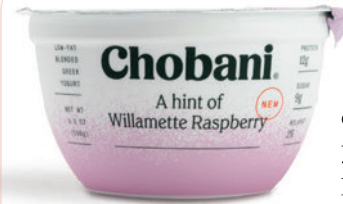
You're looking for a low-fat yogurt that's light on the added sugar. Our criteria, based on a 5-to-6 oz. container:

■ **Added sugars. None (in our Best Bites).** They have no added sugars in their ingredients list. We couldn't set a limit for Honorable Mentions because too few containers

bear the new Nutrition Facts label, which discloses the amount of both added sugars and total sugars (including milk or fruit sugar).

Want a rough estimate? Assume that any more than 4 to 6 grams of sugar (1 to 1½ teaspoons) in Greeks and 8 to 10 grams in non-Greeks is added.

- **Calories. No more than 140.** A calorie limit helps cap the added sugars in our Honorable Mentions.
- **Saturated fat. No more than 2 grams.** So non-fat (0%) or low-fat (1% or 2%) yogurt is okay, but not whole milk (3% and up) yogurt. We allowed up to 2.5 grams of sat fat in larger (7 oz.) yogurts.
- **Low-calorie sweeteners. No unsafe aspartame or sucralose or poorly tested acesulfame potassium.** Some yogurts use (safe) stevia leaf extract and erythritol.
- **Protein. At least 6 grams.** That's how much you get in the best non-Greeks. Greeks have at least twice that much because they're strained to remove liquid.
- **Calcium. At least 10 percent of the Daily Value.** Non-Greeks often have 15 to 20 percent, but most Greeks have just 10 to 15 percent (they lose some calcium when they're strained). We set no vitamin D minimum because many companies don't make their yogurt using fortified milk.



Tastes like a mix of plain and fruit yogurts.

Slashing Sugar

Plain yogurt isn't for everyone. And most light yogurts add acesulfame potassium and sucralose.

Fortunately, we found half a dozen better lines that don't top two teaspoons of

total sugar per container. Our tasters' two favorites:

■ **Chobani Greek A hint of.** With fruit purée (no whole pieces) and just “a hint of” sugar, it's “subtly sweet.”

■ **YQ by Yoplait.** YQ is made from “ultra-filtered” milk, which concentrates its protein and removes most of its lactose (milk sugar). That delivers lower-sugar, high-protein yogurt “without the tart tang” of Greeks.



Lower-sugar without the tartness of Greek.

Three other lines slash sugar even more, but some people noticed a slight after-taste from their erythritol and/or stevia extract:

- **Elli Quark 0%.** Elli makes a dozen varieties of no-sugar-added quark—a fresh cheese made with cultured milk that mimics Greek yogurt.
- **Dannon Oikos Greek Triple Zero.** The Triple Zero means no fat, artificial sweeteners, or added sugars.
- **Dannon Light & Fit Greek Zero Artificial Sweeteners.** Dannon adds just a few grams of sugar to soften the taste of its stevia extract.

Don't like sweet yogurt?

■ **Siggi's No Added Sugar** adds banana and cinnamon or peach and mango instead of sugar or stevia. Both varieties are whole milk, but the petite size (4.4 oz.) packs only 2½ grams of saturated fat.

Want non-Greek yogurt?

■ **Chobani Smooth** has 3½ teaspoons of total sugar. That's not too shabby for a non-Greek.



The Whole Truth

“You may think that low-fat yogurt is healthier, but what you’re really doing is increasing the amount of sugar in your diet,” claims verywellfit.com.

Nope.

What you’re really doing if you choose full-fat (whole milk) yogurt over low-fat is

increasing the calories and saturated fat in your diet.

Added sugar levels depend on the yogurt, not the fat. A plain fat-free **Fage Total 0%**, for example, has no more naturally occurring sugar than a plain full-fat **Fage Total 5%**.

And a sweetened Fage 0% split cup—the kind with a side of syrupy fruit—has the same amount of sugar as a Fage 5% split cup. But the Fage 5% has an extra 50 calories and 4½ grams of saturated fat.

Heads up: Many “whole milk” yogurts add *extra* cream. That’s how a sweetened **Liberté Madagascar Vanilla Bean** (5.5 oz.) reaches 220 calories, 7 grams of sat fat (a third of a day’s worth), and an estimated 3½ teaspoons (14 grams) of added sugars—as much as ⅔ cup of Breyers French Vanilla Ice Cream.

Ditching Dairy?

Many dairy-free yogurts didn’t wow our taste buds. But at least you can find enough protein and calcium if you search:

- **Soy.** With 6 grams of protein and 20 percent of a day’s calcium in 5.3 oz., every soy **Silk** flavor got an Honorable Mention. Silk also fared best in our taste tests. (**Stonyfield Organic** soy yogurt has about a teaspoon more sugar and half the calcium of Silk.)
- **Pea Protein.** Compared to other non-dairies, **Ripple Greek** is one of the highest in protein, but it didn’t impress our tasters.
- **Almond or Cashew.** Protein ranges from a measly 1 to 3 grams (**Almond Dream**, **Forager Organic Cashewgurt**) to a decent 5 or 6 grams (**Silk Almondmilk**) to a hefty 10 or 11 grams (**Kite Hill Greek-Style**).
- **Coconut.** Most coconut *milk* yogurts have virtually no protein and 2½ to 5 grams of sat fat. **Co Yo**—which uses only fatty coconut *cream*—packs 320 to 390 calories. Yikes.



One of the few dairy-free Honorable Mentions.

Beyond Greek

Can’t get enough of Greek yogurt’s thick texture and high protein? Say hello to Icelandic skyr (it’s pronounced “skeer”).

“Similar to yogurt, skyr is a cultured dairy product born in Iceland,” says **Icelandic Provisions**. “The original cultures we use to make our skyr impart a rich, creamy flavor, whereas yogurt cultures may provide a sour, tart taste.”

Indeed. Our taste-testers raved about the company’s skyr, which comes in fruit-forward, tongue-twisting flavors like **Blueberry Bilberry**, **Cherry Black Currant**, and **Strawberry Lingonberry**.

Every Provision flavor except **Coconut** is an Honorable Mention, with 15 grams of protein and 15 percent of a day’s calcium for a mere 130 calories, 1 gram of saturated fat, and 2½ teaspoons of sugar per 5.3 oz. tub.

Those numbers are nearly identical to fellow Icelandic skyr **Siggi’s 2%**, which is a tad more tart.

Skyr we come!



Icelandic skyr is Greek’s creamy cousin.

Mix It Up

Nearly every yogurt-maker now has a “mix-in” line like the original, **Chobani Flip**. But healthy toppings are still scarce. A few examples, from least to most calories:



Better: Make your own mix-ins.

- **Dannon Light & Fit Greek Crunch.** About half of its 130 calories come from artificially sweetened yogurt, with the other half from mostly candy or white-flour junk (like graham crackers, cookie pieces, or fudge-covered pretzels). Don’t bother.
- **Dannon Oikos Protein Greek Crunch.** Its sugar (2 teaspoons) and protein (17 grams) beat regular **Dannon Oikos Greek Crunch** because its yogurt is sweetened with stevia and its “crunch” contains soy protein isolate.
- **Siggi’s Simple Sides.** The sides—like nuts and dried fruit—are admirable, but the yogurt is whole milk.
- **Noosa Mates.** Sweetened whole milk yogurt with a bevy of chocolate chips, pretzels, nuts, and/or granola means 230 to 270 calories and 4½ to 6½ teaspoons of sugar.

Got some fruit, pistachios, toasted almond slivers, or muesli? Why not make your own “mix-in”? 🍌

Hot Tubs

Best Bites (✓✓) have no added sugar, no unsafe or poorly tested low-calorie sweeteners, no more than 140 calories and 2 grams of saturated fat (2.5 grams in 7 oz. yogurts), and at least 6 grams of protein and 10 percent of a day's calcium. **Honorable Mentions** (✓) have the same criteria, but can have added sugar. Products are ranked from least to most calories, then least to most saturated fat, most to least protein, and most to least calcium.

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Total Sugars (tsp.)
Plain (5-6 oz., unless noted)					
✓✓ Stonyfield Organic 0%	70	0	7	25	2
✓✓ Chobani Greek 0%	80	0	15	15	1
✓✓ Dannon Oikos Greek 0%	80	0	15	15	1.5
✓✓ Fage Total 0%	90	0	18	20	1
✓✓ Elli Quark 0%	90	0	17	20	1.5
✓✓ Siggi's 0%	90	0	16	15	1
✓✓ Wallaby Organic Aussie Greek 0%	100	0	17	20	1
✓✓ Dannon Lowfat	100	1.5	7	25	2.5
✓✓ YQ by Yoplait	110	2	17	15	0
Brown Cow Cream Top Whole Milk	110	3.5	6	20	2
✓✓ Icelandic Provisions Skyr	120	1	17	20	1
Stonyfield Organic 100% Grassfed	120	4	5	20	1.5
✓✓ Wallaby Organic Aussie Greek 1.5%	130	2	16	20	1
Stonyfield Organic Greek Whole Milk	130	3	14	15	1
✓✓ Fage Total 2% (7 oz.)	140	2.5	20	25	1.5
Fage Total 5% (7 oz.)	190	7	18	25	1.5
Flavored (5-6 oz., unless noted)					
Dannon Light & Fit Original ^{1,5}	70	0	5	15	2
✓✓ Elli Quark 0% ¹	80	0	14	20	1.5
Dannon Light & Fit Greek ^{1,5}	80	0	12	15	1.5
Dannon Light & Fit Zero Artificial Sweeteners ¹	80	0	5	15	2.5
✓ Dannon Light & Fit Greek Zero Artificial Sweeteners ¹	90	0	13	15	2
Activia Fruit on the Bottom (4 oz.) ¹	90	1	4	15	3
Yoplait Greek 100 Protein ^{1,5}	100	0	14	15	1.5
✓ Fage Total 0% split cup—except Honey ¹	100	0	13	15	2.5
✓ Stonyfield Organic Greek 0% ¹	100	0	13	15	2.5
✓ Stonyfield Organic 0% ¹	100	0	7	25	3
✓ Siggi's 0% ¹	110	0	15	15	2.5
✓ Chobani Greek Blended 0% Vanilla	110	0	13	15	3
✓ Dannon Oikos Greek 0% ¹	110	0	12	15	3.5
✓ Stonyfield Organic Lowfat ¹	110	1	6	20	3.5
✓✓ Dannon Oikos Greek Triple Zero ¹	120	0	15	15	1.5
✓ Wallaby Organic Aussie Greek 0% ¹	120	0	12	15	4
✓ Chobani Smooth ¹	120	1	11	15	3.5
✓ Chobani Greek A hint of ¹	120	1.5	12	15	2
✓ Fage Total 2% split cup—except Honey ¹	120	1.5	12	15	2.5
Siggi's No Added Sugar (4.4 oz.) ¹	120	2.5	11	10	1
✓ Activia Greek—except Blueberry ¹	130	0	12	15	4.5
✓ Icelandic Provisions Skyr—except Coconut ¹	130	1	15	15	2.5
✓ Chobani Fruit on the Bottom ¹	130	1	12	15	3.5
Dannon Fruit on the Bottom ¹	130	1	5	20	5
✓ YQ by Yoplait ¹	130	1.5	15	10	2

	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Protein (g)	Calcium (% DV)	Total Sugars (tsp.)
Siggi's 4% (4.4 oz.) ¹	130	3	12	10	2
✓ Siggi's 2%—except Coconut ¹	140	1.5	15	15	2.5
✓ Chobani Greek Blended 2%—except Coconut ¹	140	1.5	12	15	3.5
✓ Wallaby Organic Aussie Greek 1.5%—except Honey ¹	140	1.5	12	15	3.5
✓ Dannon Lowfat—Coffee or Vanilla	140	1.5	7	25	5
✓ Wallaby Organic Aussie Smooth 1.5%—except Vanilla Bean ¹	140	1.5	7	20	4.5
Icelandic Provisions Skyr Coconut	140	3	15	15	2.5
Activia Greek Blueberry	150	0	12	15	4
Yoplait—Lactose Free or Original ¹	150	1	6	20	4.5
Wallaby Organic Aussie Smooth 1.5% Vanilla Bean	150	1.5	7	20	5
Brown Cow Cream Top Whole Milk ¹	150	3	4	15	5
Chobani Blended 2% Coconut	150	3.5	12	15	3
Fage Total 5% split cup—except Honey ¹	150	4.5	11	15	2.5
Dannon Oikos Greek Traditional ¹	160	2.5	11	15	4
Oui by Yoplait ¹	160	4.5	5	15	3.5
Fage Total 0% split cup Honey	170	0	13	15	7
Siggi's 2% Coconut	170	5	15	15	2.5
Siggi's Triple Cream (4 oz.) ¹	170	6	9	10	2
Fage Total 2% split cup Honey	190	1.5	12	15	7
Wallaby Organic Aussie Greek 1.5% Honey	190	1.5	12	15	6.5
Fage Total 5% split cup Honey	210	4.5	11	15	7
Liberté ¹	210	7	4	10	4.5
Noosa (8 oz.) ¹	280	7	12	40	7.5
Flavored with Mix-Ins (5-6 oz.)					
Dannon Light & Fit Greek Crunch ^{1,5}	130	1.5	11	15	2.5
Dannon Oikos Protein Greek Crunch ¹	160	0.5	17	15	2
Dannon Oikos Greek Crunch ¹	170	1	12	15	4.5
Yoplait Mix-Ins ¹	190	2	7	20	5
Chobani Flip ¹	190	2.5	12	15	4
Siggi's Simple Sides ¹	210	5	15	15	2.5
Noosa Mates ¹	250	6	9	25	5.5
Non-Dairy (5-6 oz., unless noted)					
✓ Stonyfield Organic Soy Vanilla	130	0	6	10	4.5
Forager Organic Cashewgurt ¹	130	1	2	2	2.5
Forager Coconut Cashewgurt (4 oz.) ¹	130	5	2	0	1.5
✓ Silk Soy ¹	140	0	6	20	4
✓ Stonyfield Organic Soy Strawberry	140	0	6	10	5
✓ Ripple Greek Original	140	0.5	12	10	1.5
Almond Dream ¹	150	0	1	20	4
Ripple Greek—except Original ¹	180	0.5	12	10	3.5
Silk Almondmilk ¹	190	1	5	10	3.5
Kite Hill Greek-Style ¹	200	1	10	8	2.5
Co Yo Organic ¹	350	31	3	0	1.5

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honorable Mention. ¹ Average of the entire line or of the varieties listed. ⁵ Contains acesulfame potassium and sucralose. Note: To convert teaspoons of sugar to grams, multiply by 4.2.

Protein Target: 75 grams. **Daily Values (DVs): Saturated Fat:** 20 grams. **Calcium:** 1,000 milligrams. **Added Sugars:** 50 grams (12 teaspoons).

Note: % DVs for calcium are based on the old Nutrition Facts label, which is still on most foods. The new label has a higher DV (1,300 mg).

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



RIGHT STUFF

Best Dressed



Yes, the freshest, most flavorful salad dressings are the ones you whip up yourself. But sometimes, that's just not in the cards.

Enter **Trader Joe's refrigerated dressings** in three mouth-popping flavors.

"Most refrigerated dressings are heat pasteurized for safety," says [Trader's](#)

[website](#). Instead, these newbies use "very cold water and very high pressure to achieve the same food safety results, without cooking the ingredients. The result is a dressing with big, bold, bright flavors." They ain't kiddin'.

And you won't find any xanthan gum or Yellow 5 food dye or modified food starch. We're talking ingredients like avocado, olive oil, and basil in the **Green Goddess**, carrots, ginger purée, and miso in the **Carrot Ginger Miso**, and almond butter, lemon juice, ginger purée, and turmeric in the **Almond Butter Turmeric**.

A two-tablespoon serving of each dressing has no more than 60 calories, 1 gram of added sugar, and—thanks to those real ingredients—an impressive 110 milligrams of sodium.

We love anything that gets people to eat more greens. But why stop there? Try the Green Goddess on black beans, avocado, tomato, and quinoa. Or the Carrot Ginger Miso with salmon, stir-fried broccoli, and scallions. Or the Almond Butter Turmeric with chicken, apple slices, toasted almonds, and mixed greens.

Way to go, Joe.

[traderjoes.com](#)—(626) 599-3700

Photos: Jolene Mañas/CSP (top left), Jennifer Urban/CSP (top right), Kate Sherwood/CSP (middle), merrimonc/stock.adobe.com (bottom).

FOOD PORN



Buncha Crunch

Denny's is on a mission to rebrand. A new artisan flair has arrived!

Take the **Dulce de Leche Crunch Pancake Breakfast**, part of Denny's "Premium Craft Pancakes" line.



The "new cinnamon crumb topping cooked into two buttermilk pancakes and topped with whipped cream" comes with "a pitcher of warm salted caramel for drizzling."

What says "Premium Craft" more than drowning two white-flour pancakes in "crumb" (read: sugary) topping, caramel, and whipped cream? It's a 1,220-calorie dessert dressed up to look like breakfast!

You know it's breakfast because Denny's serves the pancakes with two eggs, hash browns, and two slices of bacon or sausage links. (A breakfast of either pancakes *or* bacon, eggs, and hash browns? So outdated.)

All told, Denny's sends you home with at least 1,740 calories and a day's worth of saturated fat (21 grams) and sodium (2,900 milligrams), along with roughly 24 teaspoons of added sugar.

"Feeding our guests in the literal sense will always be at our core, but feeding their souls is arguably one of the most important," Denny's chief marketing officer told [Forbes](#) in March.

Watch out, soul. Incoming!

[dennys.com](#)—(800) 733-6697



DISH of the month

Maple Brussels Sprouts

Quarter 1 lb. brussels sprouts. Sauté in a non-stick pan in 2 Tbs. olive oil until tender-crisp (5-7 min.). Season with 1 Tbs. maple syrup, 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar, and ¼ tsp. salt. Top with ¼ cup chopped pecans. Serves 4.

quick tip

Shopping for fish? Frozen fish's quality is often as good as or better than fresh. Look for individually vacuum-packed portions that are frozen solid with no ice crystals.

