

Salty Toppings

Processed artichoke hearts, chickpeas, and olives are just a few of the salt shockers lurking on the salad bar. To avoid getting too much sodium, limit anything that comes out of a can. Also pass up cured meats. Choose beans or tuna, but not both.

Food Fix: Radishes, bell peppers, cucumbers, and other fresh vegetables are low in sodium. Rinse canned beans to remove a lot of the salt.



Coleslaw

Cabbage is fine, but coleslaw can be a diet disaster. At one popular restaurant, a small cup (4.5 ounces) has 260 calories and 21 grams of fat -- a third of most people's daily limit -- thanks to the mayonnaise.

Food Fix: Some places make a healthier slaw, so ask for nutrition information. At home, try low-fat mayonnaise or mix with nonfat yogurt.



Banana Chips

Deep-fried bananas don't look greasy, but just one ounce has 145 calories, 9 grams of fat, and 8 grams of saturated fat: about the same as a fast-food hamburger.

Food Fix: Try a fresh banana: four times more food, 0 grams of fat, all for about 100 calories.



Caesar Salad

Some foods that we think are healthy can be sneaky little diet wreckers. Take Caesar salad, for example. You might think that because it's a salad, it's fine. But just a small bowl has 300-400 calories and 30 grams of fat, thanks to loads of dressing.

Food Fix: Use only 1 tablespoon of dressing and 2 tablespoons of tangy Parmesan cheese.



Fresh Smoothies

That berry blend at a smoothie shop can have a whopping 80 grams of sugar, 350 calories or more, little protein, and often no fresh fruit. Fruit concentrates are often used instead of fresh fruit. And sorbet, ice cream, and sweeteners can make these no better than a milkshake.

Food Fix: Get the small cup. Ask for fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt, milk, or protein powder to blend in protein and good nutrition.



Energy Bars

Many of these are simply enhanced candy bars with more calories (up to 500) and a higher price tag. Their compact size also leaves many people unsatisfied. A few bites, and it's gone.

Food Fix: Choose bars that have 200 calories or less, some fiber, and at least 5 grams of protein, which helps provide energy when the sugar rush fades.



Chicken Burrito

With beans and no red meat, what's the problem? About 1,000 calories and plenty of saturated fat -- cheese, sour cream, and the fat in the jumbo flour tortilla all contribute. And when the burrito is as big as your forearm, the serving is just too big.

Food Fix: Share one. Or try a soft taco with fajita-style grilled meats and veggies on a corn tortilla with tasty, low-calorie salsa.



Sugar-Free Foods

Sugar-free food sounds like a no-brainer for weight loss. But it can be a problem if you think you can then have a large order of fries or a big dessert. Upsizing the fries adds nearly 300 calories to your meal. If you eat more calories than you burn, you'll gain weight.

Food Fix: Watch your total calories.



Enhanced Water

Vitamins are commonly added to bottled water and advertised on the front label. But some brands also add sugar, taking water from zero calories to as many as 125.

Food Fix: Refrigerating tap water may make it more appealing. Or try packets of crystallized lemon to add flavor without calories.



2% Milk

Two-percent milk sounds healthier than "whole" milk. But you may not realize that it still has more than half the saturated fat of whole milk. Here's what's in a cup of milk:

Whole milk (3.25%) = 150 cal., 8g fat, 5g sat. fat

Reduced-fat (2%) = 130 cal., 5g fat, 3g sat. fat

Skim (nonfat) = 80 cal., 0g fat, 0g sat. fat

Food Fix: If you like whole milk, blend it with 2% for a while, then 1%, then skim, until you get used to the taste of nonfat milk.



2% Milk Latte

It's tempting to choose reduced-fat milk in a latte and reward yourself with whipped cream on top. But this trade-off still adds up to 580 calories and 15 grams of saturated fat in a 20-ounce white chocolate mocha. That's more than a quarter-pound burger with cheese.

Food Fix: A sweetened, frothy beverage is a diet splurge. Limit the damage with nonfat (skim) milk and no whipped cream. You'll avoid 130 calories and two-thirds of the saturated fat.



Turkey Hot Dogs

The nutritional content of turkey hot dogs varies from brand to brand. It may say "less fat" on the front label, but when you check the fine print on the back, you find there's still plenty of fat left in each sausage.

Food Fix: Compare nutrition labels for the lowest fat content. There are some really good choices now available. Or eat them only a few times a year.



Breakfast Muffins

Muffins beat doughnuts, but they're still mainly sugary little cakes of refined flour. One store-bought muffin can hit 500 calories with 11 teaspoons of sugar.

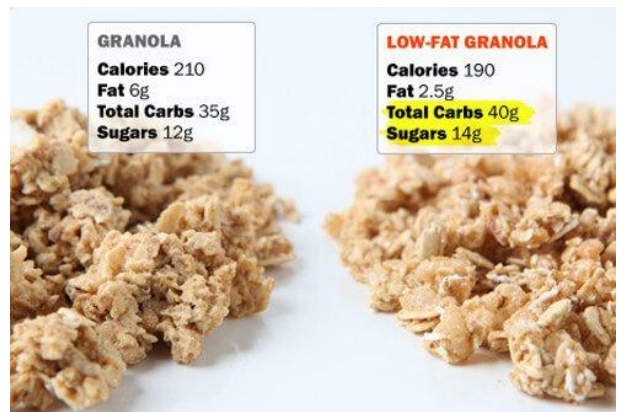
Food Fix: Go no larger than 2 1/2 inches in diameter. Or look for 100-calorie muffins at the store. Some brands are a surprisingly good source of whole grains and fiber.



Low-Fat Granola

The low-fat version of this crunchy cereal has only 10% fewer calories and is still full of sugar. Plus, the low-fat label can easily lead you to overeat. A study at Cornell University found that people ate 49% more granola when they thought it was low-fat, easily blowing past the measly 10% calorie savings.

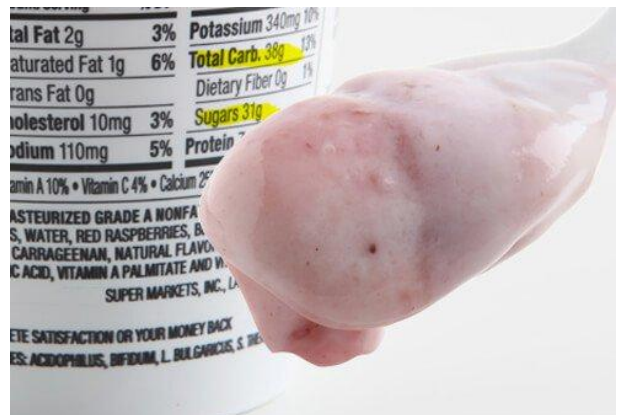
Food Fix: Look for low-sugar, whole-grain cereal, and sweeten it with fresh fruit.



Low-Fat Yogurt

Yogurt is a nutrition superstar, rich in protein and calcium. But many yogurts have lots of added sugar. Some brands add 30 or more grams of fructose, sucrose, or other sweeteners. Compare plain to fruited yogurts to see the difference between the sugars that are naturally in milk and added sugar listed on the nutrition facts panel.

Food Fix: Six ounces should be 90-130 calories and under 20 grams of sugar. Avoid sugary "fruit on the bottom" yogurts. Or blend sweetened yogurt with plain, nonfat yogurt.



Multigrain Products

When you see "multigrain" or "seven grain" on bread, pasta, or waffles, flip the package over and check the nutrition label. Even with more than one type of grain, the product could be made largely from refined grains, such as white flour, which have been stripped of fiber and many nutrients.

Food Fix: Look for "100% whole grain" (oats, wheat) as the first ingredient. Or choose the brand with more fiber.



Light Olive Oil

Anything labeled "light" is enticing when you're watching your weight. But often the food is not what you expect. Light olive oil, for instance, has the same calorie and fat content as other types. It's just lighter in color and taste.

Food Fix: Some light foods do help you save calories. Compare the labels in the store.



Added Omega-3

Some yogurt, milk, eggs, cereal, and other foods boast of added omega-3. But they may not have the kinds of omega-3 best known to help your heart: EPA and DHA. Or there's only a smidgen -- about as much as in one bite of salmon. Instead, they may have ALA from vegetable sources. ALA is not as potent or beneficial as DHA/EPA.

Food Fix: Try 6 ounces of salmon. It has 100 times more omega-3 than is in a serving of fortified yogurt. Vegetarians could consider algae-derived omega-3 supplements.



Iced Tea

The antioxidants in iced tea don't make it a health food. Too much added sugar can turn a tall glass into a health hazard. A 20-ounce bottle can have more than 200 calories and 59 grams of sugar.

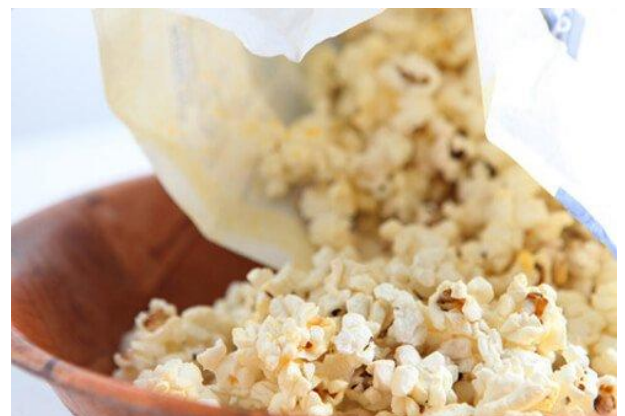
Food Fix: Skip "sweet tea" in favor of unsweetened iced tea. Lemon or artificial sweeteners add zing without calories. Herbal and berry teas taste mildly sweet without sugar.



Microwave Popcorn

The word "snack" can be a little misleading on microwave popcorn. One popular brand packs 9 grams of fat into each "snack size" bag.

Food Fix: Compare nutrition labels, and get a lower-fat popcorn that has no trans fat at all. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese or low-salt spice blends for added flavor without a lot of fat.



Iceberg Lettuce

This popular lettuce is big on crunch but a big "zero" when it comes to vitamins and flavor. And its boring taste leads many people to overdo it on the dressing and toppings.

Food Fix: Add spinach or arugula to the mix. Crumble 2 tablespoons (100 calories) of blue cheese or feta on top. Then splash the salad with a little oil and vinegar to spread flavor without a lot of calories.



Reviewed By: [Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD](#)

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