



How to Avoid Fake "Natural" Foods

Message from Milly

Greetings to all,

Today we're tackling a controversial and kind of inconvenient topic: the unhealthy ingredients found in many natural, all-natural, and even organic foods.

My intention today is not to stoke food fears. Nor to promote any type of "purist" attitude toward every little thing we eat.

After all, food is a gift that's meant to be enjoyed and appreciated, and we must always be mindful of that.

However, I also don't like seeing people being misled. Especially when they're trying their best to avoid ingredients that may hinder their healing process.

And sadly, as natural food companies continue being bought-out by big corporations, the integrity of the products we once enjoyed is often compromised.

Fortunately, with just a little knowledge under your belt you can easily avoid the fake ingredients deemed "all natural" in packaged foods.

Blessings to all,

-Milly





Just Say No To Canola and Other Processed Seed Oils

The vast majority of processed foods, including many organic brands, contain highly processed refined seed oils.

I'm not going to lie: these are hard to avoid. But not impossible if you know what to look for.

The absolute worst of all is: canola oil. Here's why:

- It nearly always comes from genetically modified rapeseed.
- It is high in pro-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids.
- It is highly processed using a high heat/hexane-based deodorization processing system. This denatures the oil causing rancidity and a hydrogenation-like effect.

Yes, some brands claim to use organic/Non-GMO canola oil. But that's not much better.

Given that over 90% of rapeseed is genetically modified[1], the purity of an organic crop is unlikely.

Plus, the intense processing destabilizes the oil, resulting in an end-product full of free radical-producing substances.

In addition, there is evidence that canola oil depletes vitamin E and may contribute to heart problems.[2]

Avoiding canola oil is a great place to start. However, if you'd like to take it a step further (and I recommend you do!), it's best to avoid all refined seed oils.

The reason is that they're all high in pro-inflammatory omega 6 fatty acids and are often subject to the same high-heat/hexane/deodorizing process, which produces a rancid oil that creates free radicals.

Which oils to avoid:

- Canola oil
- Corn oil
- Soybean oil
- Cottonseed oil
- Sunflower oil
- Safflower oil
- Grapeseed oil

One note: high-oleic, cold-pressed sunflower and safflower oils are OK for most people in moderation. I wouldn't buy them to cook with or make a habit of eating them, but if you need a bag of chips for a party and that's all you can find, it's the healthier choice.

What to use instead:

- Fresh, extra virgin olive oil
- Avocado oil
- Coconut oil (refined coconut oil is OK too because as a saturated fat, it's stable enough to handle the refinement process without becoming denatured)
- Walnut oil
- Hemp seed oil
- Organic, pastured butter, ghee, clarified butter (if you tolerate dairy)
- Fresh, whole nuts and seeds are great because they're in their whole, unprocessed state. To keep them fresh, store in the fridge or freezer.

Primal Kitchen is a good source for avocado-oil-based-dressings and mayo.

You can also find avocado oil potato chips (Boulder) and grain-free chips (Siete) online and in most grocery stores.

If you are vegan or cannot have dairy and need a butter substitute, I have recommended Miyokos before. Yes, it has a bit of sunflower oil, but it's mostly made of coconut oil...which is much better than any other plant butters I've seen.

In this case, treat it like butter and just don't overdo it.

Sources:

1:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/genetically-modified-crop/>

2:

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0271531796002564>

Parents: Be on the Lookout for Excitotoxins

Excitotoxins are ubiquitous in processed foods because they make them taste extra good...and addictive.

The most infamous excitotoxin is MSG, which the FDA still allows to be labeled in dozens of confusing ways.

A few of its aliases include:

Modified yeast
Hydrolyzed-fill-in-the-blank
Natrium glutamate
Glutamic acid

But MSG is just one of many excitotoxins.

Others contain MSG's flavor-enhancing cousin: glutamic acid.

Some examples of monosodium glutamic-acid-containing ingredients are:

- Natural flavorings (which are in lots of "healthy" foods)
- Artificial flavorings
- Dough conditioners
- Autolyzed yeast
- Different types of gums
- Corn syrup
- And other artificial flavors and sweeteners.

The problem with excitotoxins is that they attack the brain by over-activating neurotransmitter receptors. In the short-term, this can create unwanted attention and behavioral problems. Over time, it can lead to brain cell injury or death.

This isn't good for anyone, but it's particularly bad for children with developing brains.

Bottom line: [read this list](#) which tells you 20



sneaky names MSG hides under.

Then work on avoiding other excitotoxins such as artificial/natural flavorings, gums, etc.

[You can find an extensive list here.](#)

A note about natural flavors: it is true that some natural flavorings are completely natural. Like essential oils or vanilla extract.

However, since a "natural flavor" can mean anything from a harmless spice to animal secretions or modified fermentation products (like a yeast...which can be very similar to MSG), the only way to know is to ask the product manufacturer exactly what their "natural flavor" consists of.



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Don't Forget About Added Sugars and Sweeteners

Refined sugars including white sugar, brown sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup, etc. can quickly derail your health if you over-consume them.

Plus, the majority of sugar today comes from genetically modified crops that are heavily sprayed with glyphosate.

However...artificial sweeteners like aspartame, sucralose, saccharin, etc. are much worse because they're excitotoxins.

Instead, look for products that either contain no sugar or healthier, all-natural sweeteners such as: honey, coconut sugar, maple syrup, organic molasses, monkfruit, stevia, or dates.

I'm not a huge fan of the more "natural" zero-calorie sweeteners like erythritol and xylitol, because we just don't have a ton of data on how they impact health.

That said, if you're diabetic, on a really strict no-sugar diet, or just want a piece of gum that won't wreck your teeth, I'd say a non-GMO version of these two would be OK in moderation.

100% pure stevia is still my #1 choice as

a sugar-free sweetener because it's been proven safe, natural, and beneficial for years.

And in case you're wondering: I have no issue with xylitol in toothpaste (just make sure your dog doesn't eat it as xylitol is toxic to dogs!).

Finally, if the kids need ketchup, honey mustard, etc. and aren't on a no-sugar regime, at least look for a brand with organic sugar (which is still sugar but at least non-GMO).

You can find recommendations for some of my favorite healthier snacks, brands, etc. in our [April Newsletter: Healthy Resources for Food Sensitivities](#).

Happy eating!