

Weight Loss-R_x

Happy July!



Over the years of helping people lose weight, I have noticed that there are certain questions that lots of people have but don't always ask. So here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions I get.

1. Are whole wheat bread, pasta, muffins etc. ok to eat?

A tiny bit. Foods made with whole wheat flour are better than foods made with white flour- in the same way that a

half a cup of cyanide is better than a full cup of cyanide. But they are both poison. There is really nothing intrinsically healthy about flour. And if you are trying to lose weight, breads and pasta are often the first thing to cut out. Try just giving it up altogether. It isn't as hard as you think and, as you watch your weight drop, you will quickly fall out of love with breads.

2. Are frozen fruits and vegetables ok?

Absolutely. Frozen produce is almost as healthy as fresh, and it lasts longer, which encourages you to eat more of it. Canned fruits and vegetables on the other hand are not so great. They are usually loaded with sodium and other chemicals so, within reason, try to stick with fresh or frozen when you can.

3. Speaking of sodium, should I be avoiding it?

Sodium is obviously not great for us, but unless you have high blood pressure or congestive heart failure or something, you don't have to worry so much about it. Furthermore, if you are eating clean food (lots of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and lots of lean protein) then unless you are adding a ton of salt to your food during cooking or at the table you aren't getting very much sodium anyway. But if you still want to limit sodium, experiment with spices. They are way more interesting than salt and have no sodium or calories.

4. What about protein supplements? Should I be drinking them and how do I know which kind to get?

Getting enough protein is extremely important and is difficult for most of us, so a protein supplement is often a great idea. But not all supplements are created equal. I could write an entire article on this, but to make it simple, always get highly concentrated protein made from whey. Soy protein turns out to probably not be very good for us so the best proteins now are made from whey. There are some that use vegetable protein but they are usually pretty dilute (you just can't get a lot of protein from a pea). We actually used to make our own high quality protein but because of increased manufacturing costs have stopped making it for now. So the next best thing that I have found is a brand called Isopure. You can get it online or at GNC or The Vitamin Shoppe. It has lots of flavors. Is a little more expensive than some but is so concentrated that it is a better value in the long run.

5. Are protein bars ok as a healthy snack?

It is pretty hard to find protein bars that are high quality, low fat and also taste good. There are a few that are just ok and are kind of edible. Look for bars that are at least 30% protein and low in fat. In general though, I would not rely too much on these and I personally don't eat them.

6. Granola bars are healthy though right?

Look at the nutritional data for Bar A and Bar B below. One of them is a Nature Valley granola bar and one of

them is a Snickers bar. Can you tell which is which from their nutrition profiles?

	Bar A	Bar B
Total calories	210	215
Carbs	31	28
Fat	9	11
Protein	4	3

Can't tell? That's because granola bars are candy bars, plain and simple. And the crumbled kind you put on your yogurt in the morning is no better. Do not eat granola. By the way, Bar B is the Snickers bar and Bar A is the granola bar.

7. Should I be avoiding red meat?

This is a tough one. There was one large study that came out recently whose conclusion was that red meat is not good for us. But the results were iffy and the methodology was not great. The jury is still out on this but if I had to guess I think we will eventually find out that non-processed, lean red meat is fine. I would obviously avoid highly processed, nitrate and chemical laden meats like sausages, hot dogs, bacon, etc. Ham is probably not great either. But chicken and turkey can get pretty boring so an occasional steak is a nice way to break it up. But if you are going to eat steak, just make sure you are getting lean steak. There is a big difference between filet mignon or a New York strip steak, both of which are almost as lean as chicken, and a ribeye, which

is incredibly fattening (80% of the calories in a ribeye come from fat).

8. Is ground turkey healthy?

Not necessarily. The problem with ground meats in general is that in order to make them form well into patties they have to add a lot of extra fat. For instance, for regular Jenny-O ground turkey, 42% of the calories come from fat. They do make a somewhat leaner version but you can also get 96% fat free ground beef in a lot of stores that is way leaner than most ground turkey. So when it comes to ground meats, whether it's turkey, beef or even chicken, it's not about the source of the meat, it's about the fat content.

9. If I am going to drink alcohol, should I stick to hard liquor because it has less calories?

Well first of all, alcohol in general has a ridiculous amount of calories and should be limited. That being said, there is actually a website named GetDrunkNotFat.com. It gives a letter grade to hundreds of common beers, wines and mixed drinks. To put it very bluntly, if your goal is to get drunk for the least number of calories, stick with the strongest alcohol you can (vodka, gin, whiskey, etc.) and don't add a lot of stuff to it. If you are going to have a rum and coke for instance, use diet coke. And remember that tonic water, even though it's called water and is clear, has a ton of calories (as many as a can of coke). Club soda and mineral water

on the other hand have zero calories so stick to those if you can.

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