

HEALTHY *You!*

“Your Source For A Happy and Healthy Lifestyle.”

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How Natural are Natural Foods?

The food marketing industry places some interesting claims on packages, but are they really what they seem? Those of us who spent years eating “fat-free” cookies without realizing they contained twice as much sugar, now know to look extra closely at food packaging. So which phrases can lead to confusion?

- 1. Whole foods.** Generally, this refers to foods in their purest form, with no added ingredients, such as meat, produce, and unrefined grains like brown rice. Don't confuse this with “whole grain” breads and pastas — while better than white bread and pasta, these are still altered from the original ingredient.
- 2. Local.** Buying food grown close to where you live supports local farmers and is fresher, because it has less distance to travel and isn't handled as extensively. When buying produce, ask where it came from. Ideally, local foods should come from fewer than 100 miles away.
- 3. Natural.** This does not have a strict definition and can be misleading. While “natural” usually means that a food contains no added colors, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances, it can contain highly processed sweeteners (such as corn syrup and fructose) and lab-produced “natural” colors, additives, and preservatives.
- 4. Organic.** This label refers to produce, meat, eggs, and dairy that has not been treated with growth hormones, pesticides, or synthetic fertilizers. Organic is regulated, but note that a USDA seal can be used for both 100 percent and 95 percent organic foods.

Gym Bag Essentials

Whether you struggle to get to the gym, or want to streamline your locker room routine so that you can spend more time on the elliptical, having your gym bag packed and ready is a simple way to help you stick to a fitness routine.

Here is a brief list of gym bag essentials:

- Pre-filled water bottle:** Avoid the line at the water dispenser... and those tiny cups.
- Headphones:** Because you've already read the magazines six times.
- Hand towel:** Catch sweat before it becomes a slipping hazard.
- Extra workout clothes:** The only thing worse than forgetting your sneakers is forgetting your pants.
- Flip flops:** For the showers. 'Nuff said.
- Wet wipes:** In case your makeup runs as fast as you do.
- Padlock:** Because replacing your gym essentials will be REALLY inconvenient.



Healthy Eating Hurdles

Eating healthy is as easy as choosing fruits, vegetables, low-fat proteins, and whole grains, right? Let's be realistic. Eating healthy is never as easy as it sounds, but what stops us? The truth is the average person encounters many hurdles to choosing healthier food and beverages. Here are a few common ones:

- 1. Access.** Low-income areas often lack a neighborhood supermarket, but will have plenty of fast food restaurants. In addition, healthy ingredients or meals out are usually more expensive.
- 2. Taste preferences.** Be honest: Would you prefer a bowl of ice cream or steamed broccoli?
- 3. Time and convenience.** After working late, getting the kids from school, and doing household chores, do you really feel like cooking?
- 4. Stress and emotion.** After a bad day, we often turn to unhealthy foods for comfort.
- 5. Influence.** When you're out to dinner with friends and everyone orders dessert, it's hard not to join them.

Overcoming healthy eating hurdles can be easier once you know what your hurdles are. The next time you find yourself reaching for a pint of ice cream, try asking yourself the following questions to get back on track:

What is motivating my food choice? Will this food get me closer or further away from the life I want for myself? How can I improve on this choice?



Recipe of the Month:

Banana Kiwi Parfait

Ingredients:

1 banana, sliced

1 cup low-fat vanilla Greek yogurt

1 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced

½ cup of your favorite crunchy whole-grain/low sugar breakfast cereal

Instructions:

Start with half of the yogurt on the bottom of a clear glass. Top yogurt with sliced banana and ¼ cup dry cereal. Layer on the rest of the yogurt, then top with sliced kiwi and the rest of the cereal.

6 Tips for 7 Hours of Sleep

If you are getting seven hours of sleep or more a night, congratulations! You are getting optimal rest. If not, then it might be time to make sleep a priority. What keeps you up at night may also lower your quality of life. Here are five tips from the National Sleep Foundation:

1. Go to bed at the same time each night and rise at the same time each morning.
2. Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark, and relaxing environment.
3. Adjust the temperature (or your pajamas) so that you aren't too hot or too cold.
4. Use your bed for sleeping, not for activities like reading, watching TV, or listening to music.
5. Remove all TVs, computers, and other electronics from the bedroom.
6. Avoid large meals before bedtime.



A Healthier St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day has a reputation as a day to overindulge. Here's your chance to break the cycle! We rounded up some healthier ways to celebrate the Emerald Isle this year:

- **Love Irish potato candies?** Get that creamy, cinnamon kick with a low-fat chai tea latte (just go easy on the sugar).
- **Have one too many green beers?** Detox with a tall glass of unsweetened iced green tea.
- **Fill up on Irish soda bread?** Balance those empty calories with nutrient-rich steel-cut Irish oats.
- **Did your corned beef and cabbage pack a bit too much sodium?** Try chicken soup made with low-sodium broth.
- **Are your potatoes swimming in butter?** Substitute heart-healthy olive oil. You can also swap yogurt for sour cream.





Live Passionately

Do you feel unfulfilled despite everything else in your life being in place? If the answer is yes, it might be time to work on your spiritual wellness. This doesn't necessarily mean religious beliefs; spiritual wellness is the ability to have balance between our values and actions. Think about the role the following concepts play in your life:

Truth. Is your reality full of misperceptions that make it easy for you to avoid change?

Worthiness. Do you believe that you are worthy of love? Do you feel like you belong?

Courage. Do you have the courage to reject perfectionism and accept yourself for who you are?

Compassion. Are you kind to yourself and to others?

Monthly Quiz:

1. Which term refers to foods in their purest form, with no added ingredients?

- a. Organic
- b. Whole
- c. Local

2. Spiritual wellness refers to:

- a. Religious beliefs
- b. Physical fitness
- c. A balance between values and actions

3. Which is NOT a way to get seven hours of sleep or more?

- a. Having a big dinner
- b. Banning computers from the bedroom
- c. Going to bed at the same time every night



ANSWERS: 1.) b 2.) c 3.) a

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