

Are 'healthy' foods really good ?

Sakamon Devahastin, Somchai Bovornkitti

There are quite a few products on the marketing healthy food fads. Their nutritional and dietetic values are elaborated in the following examples.

Hydrogen water:

The so-called water, which contains dissolved hydrogen, has been claimed to help increase energy, improve workout recovery and reduce inflammation. The sciences behind these claims are nevertheless backed only by a few animal studies. At this moment we do not know anything about appropriate dosing or frequency to drink such hydrogen water to get its potential benefits and there is no regulation to standardize the formula. Therefore, the benefits, if any, are unknown.

Protein powder:

A variety of powdery proteins such as hemp, soy, pea, etc., that can be added to foods that do not have the required nutrient is now widely available. Such powders are claimed to aid post-exercise muscle recovery and help to feel fuller. It should be noted, however, that animal-based protein powders like whey, casein or egg white protein, are more complete than non-animal-based ones. More importantly, consuming protein from whole foods should result in extra nutrients and fiber that contribute to a healthier diet. For example, eggs contain protein as well as healthy fats and vitamins.

Low-calorie ice cream:

High-protein and low-calorie ice-cream are advocated as a healthier alternative to the likes. However, there was a report in a July 2018 issue of *Canadian Medical Association Journal* that such

low-calorie counts are derived from artificial sweeteners, which do not help people to lose their weights.

Non-pasta pasta:

Pasta made from brown rice, quinoa, lentils, chickpeas or black beans, among others, have received increasing attention. Dried pasta made from such grains, beans and legumes have more protein and fiber than regular pasta; this is because such add-ons are high in nutrients. However, beware of pasta with a vegetable in its name, e.g., spinach or tomato-based noodles. Spinach pasta may be regular pasta with a bit of powdered spinach added. The healthfulness of those pastas depends largely on what they are served with or on it. If topped with vegetables rather than Alfredo sauce, such pastas may deliver the expectation!

Wholesome snack bars:

There has been an increasing influx of legitimately healthy snack-bar options in recent years. Certain snack bars have long been a staple in the health-food aisle, despite the fact that many contain just as much sugar as a candy bar. The recommendation is to look for bars that rely on the sweetness from foods like dates and coconut rather than from table sugars. This is the way to get nutrition and fiber, without added sugar. For a midday snack, a handful of almonds or an apple can do the trick for less calories.

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