



STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

Family and Consumer Science News

EXTENSION

Food Labels often Mislead Consumers

If you take a stroll down any aisle in the grocery store, consumers will see all kinds of food labels touting products as being healthy choices. Cholesterol-free produce, gluten-free water, natural soda, 100 percent whole-grain cookies and non-GMO carrots are just a few examples of the many claims shoppers may see on the front of food packages in the United States.

Many consumers believe these claims mean the food product they are purchasing is healthier for them and their family. What it really means is the companies advertising these products are taking advantage of the lack of understanding of the public to increase their profit, said Jenni Kinsey, Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension assistant specialist, youth Community Nutrition Education Programs.

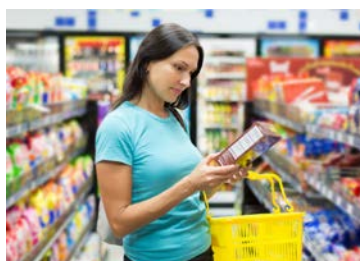
“The supermarket is full of misleading food marketing, all of which is aimed at unsuspecting customers who simply want to purchase healthy foods for their family,” Kinsey said.

“Unfortunately, consumers don’t always have a good understanding of the verbiage used on the labels. For example, cholesterol is only found in animal-based products. Therefore, produce of any kind should never contain cholesterol. In fact, anything not derived from an

l animal product should be cholesterol free.”

It does not take long to find various products claiming to be gluten free, including bottled water. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye, and therefore, water obviously is gluten free. But consumers wanting to buy healthy products, often snatch up products based solely on the wording on the package without fully understanding what they are buying. Consumers really shouldn’t be concerned about avoiding gluten unless they have a medical diagnosis and they are working closely with a medical provider.

“The term natural is another one that stands out to consumers. Currently, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration doesn’t have an official definition of natural. Therefore, this claim is up for the taking by countless food products, including soda, chips and other foods that most know



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we should limit,” she said. “Remember, a natural label claim is not a health claim. Consumers may pay more for the product with the natural label claim even though it is no different from the product next to it without the natural label claim.”

Despite the label claiming a product is made or baked with 100 percent whole grain does not make that product whole grain. Kinsey said if a food product includes whole grain in its ingredients, the package can advertise made with whole grain. However, this leads the consumer to believe they are getting a whole-grain product when they actually are not. To ensure you are purchasing a whole-grain product, look for 100 percent whole grain on the packaging.

Kinsey said there is a lot of talk about bioengineered foods or genetically modified organisms, also known as GMOs. These are used to increase crop yield and feed more people with fewer resources.

“This ultimately leads to more affordable food products. Examples of the reason these foods are bioengineered include, but are not limited to, improved drought tolerance, improved mineral absorption and insect resistance,” she said. “Despite the fact only 10 GMO foods are approved for sale in the United State, thousands of foods advertise GMO-free on the label when they do not contain and never did contain the approved GMO foods. This is simply an advertising tactic to get the upper hand on competing brands.”

The 10 approved GMO foods for sale include alfalfa, apples, canola, corn, cotton, papaya, potatoes, soybeans, summer squash and sugar beets.

Although there is an FDA front-of-package labeling initiative to combat misleading food-marketing practices, it will take years and possibly even decades to overcome all of the inappropriate claims.

“What you can do now is educate yourself, learn about ingredients and question the food label claims,” Kinsey said. “Get in the habit of asking yourself if the claim even makes sense and you’ll begin recognizing the mass number of misleading label claims.”

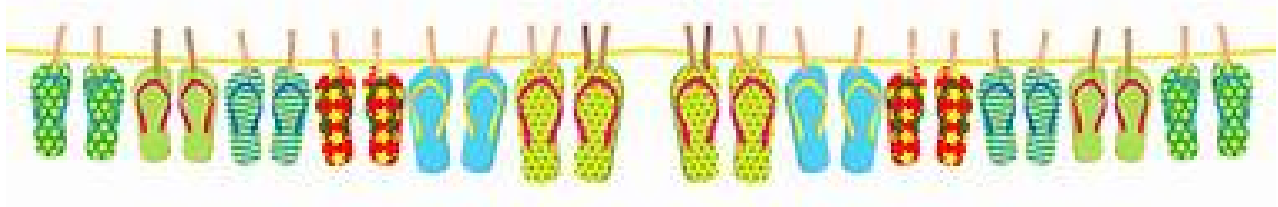
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Staying Hydrated

Stay hydrated these summer months. Here are 15 Key signs that you could be dehydrated. It might surprise you!

Did you know that a surprisingly large percentage of the population is chronically dehydrated? It is believed that anywhere up to 75% of Americans spend the vast majority of their time dehydrated and are operating at a deficit as a result.

1. CFS

Your blood and many other bodily fluids are comprised of water and when you are dehydration, these become thicker and less diluted. That in turn means that you won't be able to get the necessary oxygen and nutrients around the body as needed. This is just one factor that can make you feel tired, run down and sluggish. Another is a lack of important neurotransmitters and even a lack of nutrients as the gut is less able to digest nutrients due to a lack of digestive enzymes. In short, you can end up feeling lethargic and tired, which is described as CFS – or chronic fatigue syndrome. If you're tired and you don't know why, consider that hydration might be the issue!

2. Yellow Urine

If your urine appears a strong orange or yellow color, this is a sign that you might be dehydrated. This happens simply because the urine is not as well diluted as it would be if you had more water in your system.

3. Constipation

Dehydration is one of the most common causes of constipation. That's because dehydration causes stool to become dried out, which in turn prevents it from passing through the bowels.

4. Headaches

A headache can have a myriad of causes but one of the most common is for it to be caused by dehydration. When the brain is dehydrated this can actually cause it to shrink due to the lost fluid – just like a sponge. This then causes the brain to pull away from the skull, resulting in discomfort and difficulty thinking.

5. Irritability

Often this headache and impaired cognitive performance comes along with an irritable mood, which is understandable! You might find yourself experiencing a shorter temper, or perhaps feeling low.

6. Brain Fog – Impaired Memory and Concentration

All of this causes brain fog, leading to poor concentration, impaired memory and general difficulty getting things done.

7. Thirst

This might sound obvious but if you feel very thirsty, then there is a good chance that you need more fluids! If your mouth and throat feel dry and you are craving juice or water, then don't deny your body and drink.

8. Dry Mouth

Similar to thirstiness, you might notice that your mouth feels very dry when you are dehydrated. This is because your body needs fluid in order to create saliva, which is what normally moistens the mouth.

9. Cracking Lips and Hands

When you're dehydrated this can make its way into your skin, resulting in the appearance of cracks forming on your knuckles and your lips

10. Dry Eyes

Your eyes can also dry out as a result of your tear ducts not having the fluid they need to create moisture. This can result in them looking red and blood shot and actually dehydration is one of the most common causes of bloodshot eyes. You might also notice that if you cry, not as many tears come out!

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11. Indigestion

We've already discussed that moisture is used to break down food and to create the important enzymes that help to further this process in the gut and throughout the intestines. It should come as no surprise then to learn that dehydration can lead to indigestion, heart burn and a myriad of other difficulties.

12. Cramp

Dehydration is responsible for cramp as it alters the balance of electrolytes. It is the ratio of electrolytes like sodium, calcium and potassium, along with the amount of water in your system that is responsible for keeping your muscles functional.

13. Rapid Heartrate

If you are very dehydrated then your body will start to struggle. Blood pressure will be likely to decrease, the heartrate will increase and breathing will also become more rapid. At the same time, body temperature is likely to go up, which the body will then fight to try and cool back down.

14. Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections become more common for those that are dehydrated. There are obvious reasons for this: essentially when we are dehydrated we will of course be likely to need the toilet less often. Not only that, the urine is less diluted as we have already seen.

15. Inability to Lose Weight

Finally, those that don't drink enough water might just find they struggle to lose weight. Being dehydrated will instantly slow down the rate at which your body burns calories and that of course makes it much harder for you to burn fat while exercising.

<https://simplyhealth.today/15-signs-dehydration/15/>

SAFETY and ENVIRONMENT ...

How to Shop for an A/C Unit

What if you have a window unit that can't keep up? You may not have a correctly-sized unit for your room. An oversized air conditioner is actually less effective — and wastes energy at the same time. Air conditioners remove both heat and humidity from the air. If the unit is too large, it will cool the room quickly, but only remove some of the humidity. This leaves the room with a damp, clammy feeling.”

And of course look for an ENERGY STAR certified air conditioner. They use 10% less energy, and on average, cost \$70 per year to run. Then be sure the unit is installed correctly. An improperly installed room air conditioner leaks as much air as a 6 square inch hole, increasing energy costs and making your home less comfortable.

A Better Way to Beat the Heat

One of the simplest solutions of all, is to focus more on what the air feels like than the actual temperature. If you have ceiling fans make sure you're using them — and the right way, making sure the direction is set correctly. As you're standing under it looking up, it should be running counterclockwise ... it pulls cooler air from ground and blows it back on you. Just the air from the fan on your skin can make a room feel ten degrees cooler. And no need to run it if the room is empty.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/better/business/how-keep-your-house-cool-without-running-your-utility-bill-ncna887321#anchor-HowtoshopforanACunit>

10 Thrifty Travel Tips for Families on a Budget 10 Ways to Save Money on Vacation

Utilize Discounts

Take some time to figure out if you or your significant other qualify for some type of discount such as AAA, AARP, military, or local government. Maybe you participate in some sort of club or credit card program that can get you a discount. Even banks offer travel discounts. For example, USAA has excellent discount codes for car rentals. Use your discount on everything you can: hotel, flight, tickets, meal, or activities.

Take Free Tours

Quit paying to go on tours if you can help it. Instead, download free podcast tours of the destination you are visiting. The podcast will tell you where to start, where to go, and what to look for. Often you can find multiple podcast tours of the same place. Listen to all of them if you like, each one will tell you a little something new.

Pack Extra Ear Buds

If you go on a museum tour, they often have audio guides. Instead of having to rent one for each person, take some extra earphones. Most audio tour devices have a place to plug in a second set of earbuds. You may have to walk closer together, but you will save money on each device you don't have to rent. Even if they don't have a second place to plug in, you can just use a headphone splitter.

Free Hotel Breakfast

Only stay at hotels that include a free breakfast with their standard rate. If you are on a week-long family trip, this could save you a ton of money. Just think how much money breakfast would cost over 5-7 days. It would be even better to find a hotel with free breakfast and a free evening reception.

Buy Souvenirs Ahead of Time

If you are buying souvenirs in a theme park, you are paying a premium price. By ordering the same exact products online or at Walmart, you can save a lot of money. Another place worth checking out might be Goodwill, especially if you are headed to Disney.

Use Cheap Transportation

Do a little research before you get to your destination and figure out what the cheapest form of transportation is.

Carry a Reusable Water Bottle

Spending money on water and other beverages can quickly add up. Instead of paying for drinks, take some refillable water bottles. If you do not like the taste of tap water, you can add some water flavoring.

Combine Attractions

Many major cities offer ticket bundles where one price gets you into 5 or 6 popular attractions. You will need to plan ahead of time to decide what things you plan to do on vacation.

Pack Snacks

Buying a few snacks here and there throughout the length of your vacation can add up. Save money by purchasing some snacks at the grocery store. Good recommendations are granola bars, apples, baby carrots, bananas, cheese crackers, juice boxes, pretzels, fruit snacks, apple sauce, grapes, and veggie chips.

Stick to Carry-On Bags

Do not pay to check a large bag. Instead, have each person take a carry-on suitcase. If your child is old enough to have their own seat on the plane, then they get the same free carry-on you get. Even a small child can pull a carry-on.

OHCE NEWS...

OHCE State Meeting
July 7th, 8th and 9th
Oklahoma City, OK

Bridging the Gap Make and Take
July 17th at 10:00 am
We will be making
Bread in a Bag

**Please RSVP by July 15th so we can
purchase ingredients.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Executive Board Meeting
July 19th – 10:00 am

Summer Council Meeting
July 19th – 11:30 am

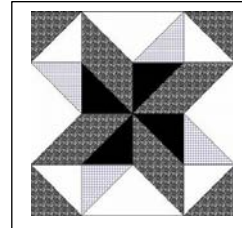
Leader Lesson
July 30th – 10:00 am

Sew-In
July 16th at 1:30 pm

Margie Juby will be teaching how to
make a thread catcher.

**Please RSVP By July 15rd if you plan
to attend so we can gather supplies.**

Pizza Box quilts are running nicely.



One person has finished all of their
blocks. A couple of others only have two
more and they are finished.

This has been a fun experience.
We will do this again next year.

