

# The Top 7 Dietary Mistakes

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## That Healthy Eaters Make

**Y**ou eat healthy, right? Most people I see in my office consider themselves healthy eaters. Yet I have noticed 7 common mistakes that many of them make. Here they are David Letterman style:

7) **TOO MUCH OIL:** Healthy eaters know that extra-virgin olive oil, coconut oil and flaxseed oil are good for us and help us burn fat. Our taste buds certainly love it. Here's the thing, though. Oils are so calorically dense that we should be eating them by the teaspoon rather than the tablespoon. Try actually measuring the oil you add to your food, and don't eat more than 2 teaspoons in a sitting. (There are 3 teaspoons in one tablespoon.) If you would like to weigh less, consider limiting your oil intake to four teaspoons a day. More than that and it will work against you.

6) **TOO MUCH JUICE:** We go to the health food store and get great healthy juices. (I could

drink that tasty Knudsen Coconut-Pineapple combo all day long!) However, juices are actually fruit with all of the blood-sugar-stabilizing fiber removed, making them more prone to increasing insulin levels. A healthier choice is to actually eat the fruit rather than drink the processed juice.

Also, research seems to indicate that our satiety mechanisms are not triggered by liquid calories, so your body doesn't realize that you are taking in calories. This prompts you to take in more calories than you actually need, increasing your body fat level. Juice intake in children has been linked to childhood obesity.

5) **TOO MUCH FRUIT:** There has been a meme in healthy circles about eating only fruit in the morning; I could not disagree more! Fruit in the morning is fine, but your body needs protein early in the day, because you have been fasting all night. When you postpone your protein, your body starts eating muscle for its protein needs. If you have this habit of going long periods without protein, you will

gradually lose muscle over time, slowing your metabolism.

One protein that seems to go well with fruit is unsweetened yogurt. Your favorite fruit with Greek yogurt (with twice the protein as regular yogurt) makes a nice light first meal of the day.

Be aware that there is emerging evidence that eating too much fructose (fruit sugar) is associated with fatty deposits in the liver, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, high triglycerides, metabolic syndrome, and obesity. I recommend limiting your overall fructose intake to 20 grams per day. This is not very much, equivalent to two apples or three bananas. If you are trying to lose weight, then keep your fructose intake under fifteen grams per day.

4) **TOO MUCH SUGAR:** Food marketers take advantage of the human mind's natural tendency to rationalize by giving conscious eaters healthy-sounding names for various forms of sugar, like "evaporated cane juice" or "brown sugar." Healthier-sounding names, along with images like brown cows, exploit our emotional associations to healthy, wholesome choices.

Hence people who would never add a teaspoon



of table sugar to their coffee or tea will eat a brown-cow yogurt that contains 6+ teaspoons of sugar!

Brown sugar, evaporated cane juice, blackstrap molasses and maple syrup, while having a few more micronutrients than table sugar (sucrose), have a very similar glycemic index (see chart). The point is that they are not much different than table sugar, so don't let the food marketers manipulate you, cut way down on all sugars!

3) **TOO FEW LEGUMES:** Beans are a nutritional powerhouse. They are chock full of great brain nutrients like lecithin and folate, with lots of magnesium and manganese. Their amino profile is rich in methionine, which is essential for detoxification, cell energy, shiny hair, smooth skin, and fat-burning. Black beans are a rich source of molybdenum, an essential trace element for processing sulfites and alcohol. If you get an instant headache from a glass of wine, you likely are low in molybdenum. Legumes are also very rich in soluble fiber. Soluble fiber performs many functions in the body, including slowing down digestion, reducing the insulin and blood sugar spike from other foods.

Bean fiber also absorbs bile acids and other liver excretions, carrying them out of the body. This prevents hepato-enteric recirculation, where the liver reabsorbs its own secretions. This makes beans a very alkalizing food, as well as being essential for normal daily detoxification. All beans are good for you, but the healthiest are garbanzo, pinto, kidney, black, lima, cannellini and navy beans. Black beans are the nutritional standouts of the bunch, as the pigments creating that dense color are very nutritious.

Ideally you want to soak dried beans overnight, then rinse them before cooking. However, I love the extreme convenience of canned beans. They are already well cooked. Just pop the lid, give them a quick rinse and they are ready for adding to a salad. Or gently heat them with a little oil and some spices in a saucepan—ready to eat in three minutes! You

don't want to overeat beans, they are quite rich in carbohydrates. I recommend 1–3 half-cup servings spread throughout the day.

2) **NOT ENOUGH PROTEIN:** All the negative news about meat, fish, eggs and dairy products over the years has us healthy eaters leery of eating these concentrated animal proteins. While some caution is warranted, too many healthy eaters don't eat enough protein. Protein is important for immune function, brain function, bone health, energy, and muscle maintenance. When you eat too little protein, you gradually lose muscle mass, and risk becoming overweight due to the damaging of your metabolism. Many obese people have low muscle mass, which is called "sarcopenic obesity."

If you exercise a lot, I recommend eating about 0.9 grams of protein per pound of body weight (or desired body weight) for women, and 1 gram per pound for men. If you are more sedentary, then shoot for about 0.6 grams of protein per pound of desired body weight for women, and 0.7 for men. For example, if you are a vigorously exercising 130-pound woman who wants to weigh 120 pounds, you will need 108

grams of protein/day. A sedentary woman of the same weight needs 72 grams of protein/day. Be sure to include the small amounts of protein found in grains, nuts, dairy products, and vegetables in your tally—it all counts.

Healthy sources of protein include grass-fed, lean beef (93% lean or better), eggs, egg whites, fish, shellfish, poultry, lamb, buffalo, venison, elk, tempeh, non-fat or low-fat cottage cheese, and part-skim mozzarella. Consider using a protein powder once or twice a day for a super-convenient source of easily-digestible, high-quality protein. My favorite protein powder is vanilla *Muscle Milk Natural*—no artificial sweeteners and it tastes like a milkshake!

1) **TOO MUCH GRAIN:** We healthy eaters know all about how to choose healthy whole-grain

Glycemic Index*	
Glucose	100
White bread	95
High fructose corn syrup	80
Whole-wheat bread	75
White sugar	66
Brown sugar	64
Raisins	61
Sugar cane juice	56
Evaporated cane juice	55
Black strap molasses	55
Maple syrup	54
Grapes	50
Lactose	46
Honey	46
Fructose	20
Agave syrup	13
Stevia	1

*\*A measure of how fast this food raises your blood sugar. (Lower is better.)*

products. We understand that semolina flour, 100% Durum wheat, and wheat flour are all synonyms for the rightfully dreaded white flour. We are on to the fact that bread can be labeled “whole grain” while being mostly not. Just because whole grains are healthier than refined, it doesn’t mean we should eat them at every meal. It’s not uncommon for a healthy eater to report eating two pieces of whole-grain toast in the morning, a sandwich with two pieces of bread along with some chips for lunch, and then pasta for dinner! That’s 6-to-7 servings of grains every day—far too much!

Most healthy eaters understand that sugar spikes their blood sugar, elevating insulin levels and causing calories from the blood to be stored as fat. Then your blood sugar goes low, triggering more hunger. Less known is the fact that most whole-grain products have a higher glycemic index than table sugar. Some question whether we should eat grains at all—a relatively recent addition to the human diet that required processing to be digestible.

Anthropologists know that Hunter-Gatherers have much healthier and larger teeth and bones compared to their agrarian counterparts. For sure, most of us should not eat more than 1 or 2 servings of grains per day. (One serving is equivalent to 1 slice of bread or 1/2 cup of cooked rice.) My favorite whole-grain bread is *Ezekiel 4:9 Sprouted Bread*, with an amazingly low glycemic index of 37. What should you eat instead of grains? Focus on eating lots of vegetables, lean proteins and legumes.

Recognizing these 7 common mistakes should help you separate

the hype from the truth and assist you to reach your health and weight-balance goals quicker. Need more specific guidance? Come see me and we can design an eating routine that will work with your personal tastes and lifestyle. ■

*Bozeman’s BodyMind Chiropractor, Dr. Hans Conser, DC, offers scientifically-based, individualized weight-loss and detox programs at his office Amazing Touch Chiropractic in downtown Bozeman. (See back cover for additional services offered.) Dr. Hans can be reached at 595-1928 or scheduled online at [www.BozemanChiropractic.com](http://www.BozemanChiropractic.com).*

