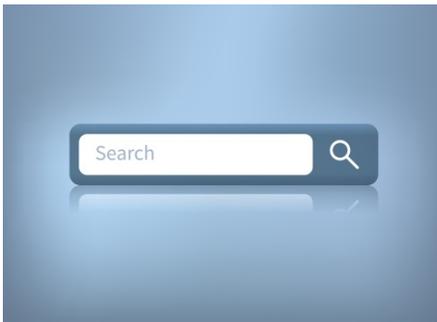


# NUTRITION MATTERS

## DON'T FALL FOR FALSE INFORMATION ON THE WEB



Is the Internet your first stop when researching nutrition and food? Think twice before you believe what you read. Ask yourself the following questions to make sure your sources are accurate and reliable.

### 1. Is the information credible?

For any blog or website you visit, look for the author of the site. If you cannot find this information, try clicking on Contact or About.

Information from a registered dietitian or a recognizable health organization means you are getting up-to-date material from a professional with a high level of education and he or she must follow ethical standards of practice. A registered dietitian will have the initials “RD” or “RDN” after their name. Any other nutrition title, no matter how impressive it sounds, is not a title protected by law, meaning, they can have little to no quality nutrition background.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675  
TTY 1-866-512-6228  
york.ca/nutrition

Organizations like Health Canada, Dietitians of Canada (unlockfood.ca), The Heart and Stroke Foundation and Telehealth Ontario are great sources for reliable information.

Other health professionals like medical doctors and physiotherapists or academic researchers may also provide reliable nutrition information. However, recognize their intentions for offering that information.

### 2. IS THE WEBSITE TRYING TO SELL YOU A PRODUCT?

Take a closer look at the website to see if they are trying to sell you a product. Here are some things to look out for that may reveal the seller's intentions:

- The focus is on high levels of certain vitamins, minerals or nutrients
- They say that all people are poorly nourished and that the soil is depleted
- They say all diseases are the result of poor diets and can be treated with foods or supplements
- Results are quick and dramatic
- Anecdotes, testimonials or celebrity endorsements are used instead of research or science
- Disclaimers and/or jargon (e.g. detoxify, cleanse) are used instead of plain, easy to understand language
- They use single laboratory tests to determine your body's nutritional status

You might also see advertising materials along the top or side of the web page and this could be an indication that the information is not from a reliable source.

### 3. IS THE INFORMATION CANADIAN?

Rules for nutrition labelling, supplements and criteria for nutrition claims are different in each country. These rules are based on many factors unique to each country; including their food supply, population make-up and national nutrition goals.

When looking at the nutrition label of a product online, make sure you are looking at the Canadian version. For example, many foods in the USA are fortified with vitamin D but only a few in Canada. Further, in Canada it is illegal to give growth hormones to cows that produce milk, whereas in the USA, it is legal.

### 4. IS THE INFORMATION SCIENTIFIC?

Good health and nutrition advice is based on quality research that has been carefully checked and tested for reliability. If there isn't a reference list that links to the original research, it may be based on low quality research or personal opinion.

Check that research is peer reviewed and there are no conflicts of interest to make sure the story hasn't been spun for a desired outcome. Is this information being sponsored?

For example, it may be self-serving if a sports drink company sponsors research about their specific drink's impact on cyclists' endurance. Their goal is to sell the sports drink, not increase endurance.

### 5. Does it sound too good to be true?

Does the claim rely on special products, fast fixes or an instant cure? Be cautious of catchy claims that try to sell you something. Claims that sound too good to be true usually are. Marketers will often play on reader's emotions, by making you feel that you are not alone in

your health problems. They may tell you a story that makes you emotional and then ties this into the product they are promoting. Ask yourself if the person promoting the product might profit from its sale in some way. If so, move on.

Be aware of claims that advise you not to eat from one or more food groups. Quality scientific studies show that you need to eat a variety of foods from all four food groups to meet your nutrient needs.

### 6. IS THE INFORMATION CURRENT?

Information on nutrition is always changing. It can be challenging to stay up-to-date with the most current and reliable research. Always check the date on the article or website. Nutrition information older than five years may be outdated.

The following are some reliable websites on healthy eating:

[Unlock Food](http://www.unlockfood.ca) www.unlockfood.ca

[Dietitians of Canada](http://www.dietitians.ca) www.dietitians.ca

[eaTracker](http://www.eatracker.ca) www.eatracker.ca

[Health Canada-  
Healthy Eating](http://www.canada.ca/foodguide) www.canada.ca/foodguide

[Heart and Stroke  
Foundation of Ontario-  
Nutrition column](http://www.heartandstroke.on.ca) www.heartandstroke.on.ca

For more information or to speak to a registered dietitian at no cost, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or visit [www.unlockfood.ca](http://www.unlockfood.ca).

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