

Video Description:

The video starts with how social media is a way we get our information, and it is easy to receive misguided information. In the case of nutrition and health there are many influencers providing advice that isn't evidence based or scientifically backed.

There is also a slight tidbit about how it is important that we look at our entire diet. The video then discusses how food packages are based on DV but that does not suit everyone's individual needs.¹

The video then uses sodium as an example of a micronutrient that has many misconceptions. A lot of people may think that salt equals taste so the video talks about growing a tolerance to salt and using salt replacers to disprove that salt equals taste. There is also the notion that salt/sodium causes dehydration, but drinks containing sodium were shown to have greater fluid retention and lower urine output.

The video then discusses Chinese restaurant syndrome which relates back to the high levels of monosodium glutamate in Chinese foods however the basis of this theory/syndrome is rooted in anti-Asian racial bias and was used to point out how easily we can come under the influence of false information.

The video then tells viewers how to separate fact from fiction. The best thing we can do is look at the source of the information. If after you have checked the source and are still unsure, it is always best to consult a professional.

Script:

Hey You! Listen Up!

With social media and the internet becoming the predominant way we get our information, it is quite easy to receive misguided or just outright false information. In the case of nutrition and health there are many influencers or just “regular people” providing advice that they found has worked for them, but that aren’t actually evidence based scientifically backed.

It is important that we look at our entire diet and not only what we eat but how we eat it. Our day to day needs can change based on our activities as well as other factors like medications we are taking.

One thing to take into consideration is how foods are labeled. Packages display the percent of daily value, which is based on a 2000 calorie a day diet. Not everyone needs 2,000 calories in one day as many people will need significantly more or less. It is important to understand your individual needs to ensure proper micronutrient intake.¹

A good example of a micronutrient that has become more and more demonized by the media is sodium. One problem is that a lot of people may think that salt equals taste. It has been speculated that higher salt intake will increase your taste threshold, meaning you grow somewhat of a tolerance to it.² There has also been promise in natural flavor replacements replicating the taste of salt.³ Despite there being ways to flavor foods without salt, there will always be people who swear by it. It is always important to consult experts and research when your health is involved to ensure you get consistent and accurate data. There is also the notion that salt/sodium causes dehydration, but drinks containing sodium were shown to have greater fluid retention and lower urine output.⁴

While not as common in today's media, there is still talk of a hoax called the “Chinese restaurant syndrome.” Chinese restaurant syndrome relates back to the high levels of monosodium glutamate in Chinese-American foods. It claims that eating too much Chinese food can cause numbness, dizziness, and palpitations. Baad-Hassan showed that MSG may cause headaches, but does not cause other symptoms associated with Chinese restaurant syndrome.⁵ The basis of this theory/syndrome is speculated to be rooted in anti-Asian racial bias.

Chinese restaurant syndrome is an example of how when one voice shouts louder than other, that is the voice many people will believe.

So how do we determine what is fact vs fiction?

The best thing we can do is look at the source of the information. Reputable sources are sources like the CDC, American Heart Association, USDA, FDA. The best sources are those that have the least bias, so anything funded by or in support of specific products can often times be dismissed. Another good thing to look at is if the sources agree. If nutritional information goes against the norm without quantifiable data it may not be a valid source. If after you have checked the source and are still unsure, it is always best to consult a professional. If your PCP doesn't know the answer they should be able to refer you to someone who does.

Always check your facts, your health could be on the line.

SMOG Index Readability - 11.9 meaning it as the level of a high school senior or college freshman

References:

Original articles:

1. Talati Z, Egnell M, Hercberg S, Julia C, Pettigrew S. Consumers' Perceptions of Five Front-of-Package Nutrition Labels: An Experimental Study Across 12 Countries. *Nutrients*. 2019;11(8):1934. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/nu11081934>
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3. Voinea A, Stroe SG, Codină GG. The Effect of Sea Salt, Dry Sourdough and Fermented Sugar as Sodium Chloride Replacers on Rheological Behavior of Wheat Flour Dough. *Foods*. 2020;9(10):1465. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/foods9101465>
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5. Baad-Hansen L, Cairns B, Ernberg M, Svensson P. Effect of Systemic Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) on Headache and Pericranial Muscle Sensitivity. *Cephalalgia*. 2009;30(1):68-76. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2982.2009.01881.x>

Images:

1. FDA. How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. *FDA*. Published online September 27, 2023. <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>
2. Structural Chemical Formula Sodium Salt Stock Vector (Royalty Free) 2154431959. Shutterstock. <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/structural-chemical-formula-sodium-salt-2154431959>