



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
Global Academy of  
Agriculture and Food Systems

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# Proceeding with caution

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Amelia B Finaret, Honorary Lecturer

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# Myths

- It is easy to tell reliable from non-reliable nutrition information
- Nutrition advise from websites is always reliable
- Others always know more than I do about what I should eat

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# Who is speaking and what are their credentials?



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The best source for individualized dietary advice is registered and licensed dietitians (RD, RDN) or registered nutritionists (RNut), associate nutritionists (ANutr), or a fellow of AfN (FAfN)



# Is the material (video, article) trying to make you afraid?

Fear based tactics are manipulative and do not give a complete picture of the health effects of food.



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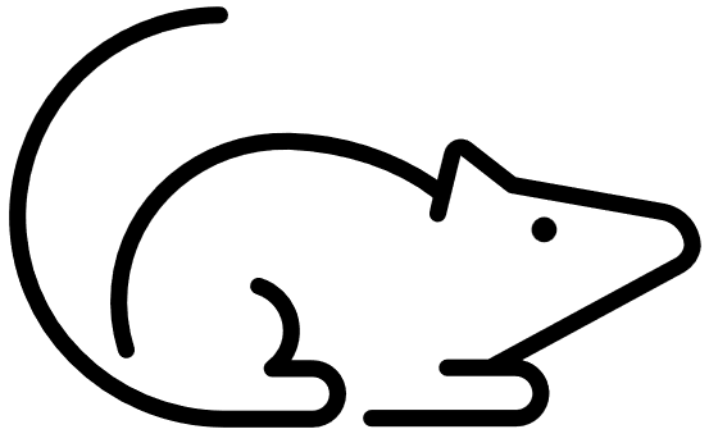
# Does the recommendation sound too good to be true?



- Quick fixes for “getting healthy” don’t work and may be unsafe.
- Changes that can be made “quickly” are usually not easy, like reducing sugar-sweetened beverages.



# Is the recommendation only backed-up by animal studies or in-vitro studies?



# Is the recommendation extreme, such as eliminating entire food groups?

Unless you have food allergies, eliminating entire food groups from your diet could reduce your health and quality of life.



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# Does the recommendation offer a miracle cure or breakthrough?



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Nutrition science usually does not result in “breakthrough” findings.



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# Does the recommendation use lots of meaningless nutrition language?

- Clean
- Natural
- All-natural
- “Made with...”
- No additives
- Net carbs
- Detoxifying



# Does the recommendation come from a single scientific study?

Many scientific studies must be interpreted together to make new discoveries.



# Does the recommendation involve purchasing supplements?



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- Most people do not need supplements. Some people do need supplements.
- Many supplements are unregulated.
- Many supplements make health claims that are not true.



# Does the recommendation involve taking large amounts of vitamins or minerals?



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- You don't need more than the recommended amount of vitamins and minerals.
- Sometimes, consuming more than the recommended amount can cause health problems.



# Does the recommendation involve taking special tests to analyse your nutritional status or specific nutrient needs?

- Human bodies are more similar than they are different.
- Assessment of nutritional status should only be done by qualified medical professionals using evidence-based tools and tests.



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# Helpful sources

- Nutrition misinformation: How to identify fraud and misleading claims (Colorado State University Extension)
- OSF Healthcare: Watch for red flags in nutrition claims
- USDA: Nutrition misinformation and fraud



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# Thank you

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