

Toni Talks | Humanity Matters

Nutritional Time Bombs: The top six things food manufacturers may be hiding from you

[00:00:00] This is Toni Julian, and I'm the host of Toni Talks -- Humanity Matters. Today we're going to be talking about nutritional time bombs; the top six things that food manufacturers may be hiding from you. And believe me when I say what you don't know can absolutely hurt you. The goal I believe, of food manufacturers is to present their company in a way that is a healthy brand, or perhaps healthier than their competitors on the market, so they may understate the unhealthy ingredients and emphasize the healthier ones.

[00:00:32] It's an 806.3-billion-dollar market, and I'm talking about the U S packaged food market size as it was estimated in 2016. Our lifestyles now are changing. Our consumption of convenience foods amongst the masses is growing incrementally and there are a lot of different factors that are driving that market, which is the desire for more grab and go foods.

[00:00:56] So is it competitive? You bet it is. Now the question is, is it an all-out deception or just a little bit of spin to make things seem healthier than they actually are? Now, not all companies are directly misleading. Some are really transparent out there, and I give them major props for that. Others are downright deceitful, and my point here is not really to determine their intentions.

[00:01:21] I am going to leave that to you, but just to make sure that I'm doing my part so that you're aware of certain things to watch for. I think there's a lot of confusion about the way many food manufacturers are allowed to market and label their products to you. And as a healthy food producer, I've had to learn the laws because my company, even though we're a very small company and we make all of our products by hand; we have to abide by the same FDA regulated laws as the large manufacturers. So I've gotten to know just a little bit about the rules, and I can tell you coming into this business, it was alarming in a lot of ways in that there are so many rules that I wasn't aware of, that I had to learn.

[00:02:04] And there are so many to the benefit and protection of the consumer, and there are also many loopholes that I think a lot of these manufacturers will take advantage of if they can. And again, I just believe because it is such a competitive marketplace now, the good news is that these laws are changing to the benefit of consumers like you.

[00:02:26] And I wrote my first book, BITE ME! Change Your Life One Bite at a Time, because I was actually, I think about seven or eight years ago, I was outright angered and frustrated with the way food companies were misleading the public. Now, how can you make a decision when you're barraged by so many different types of misinformation from front of packaging statements to walking into a restaurant and just seeing certain statements there.

[00:02:53] Maybe not health claims, but slogans and marketing designed to get you to buy and or indulge in their product. So today we're going to talk about the naked truth about the food industry, and I am not going to be pulling any punches. I believe that God created

nourishment for man--and this is the process--man produces food products, the government poses laws and you get to make choices! But that means you need to be informed because I believe the intentions of the part where I talk about man producing food products is not consistently in your best interest. And that's the part that I have a problem with. Some food products are just adulterated and obfuscated, which is misleading.

All right, so here goes, we're going to talk about some of the most common things that occur in the food industry. And the first I want to talk about is the disclosure or nondisclosure of the amount of fat that's in our packaged products.

[00:03:51] And I'm going to pick on Pam, which is a 100% canola oil spray can that we use for our cooking. And one of the claims on the front is for "fat-free cooking" or "adds a trivial amount of fat". Now when you look at that, the downside is I think you're going to consume way more fat and calories than you were ever aware of because this is a deceptive way of claiming.

[00:04:16] And also not just the front of package, but the nutrition facts labeling. So when you look at it, I'm going to challenge you to try to spray for the amount of time that they say is a serving size. Kirkland has a brand, their own brand, and their serving size is one quarter of a second of spray. So, it's 0.25 grams.

[00:04:39] And they're claiming there are 1,927 servings per can. Okay, great. But I would challenge you to actually try to spray that. Pam is saying one third of a second. First of all, that's not the way anybody really uses their products, is it? When you're cooking, you're going to spray one, two, three, maybe three seconds, five seconds.

[00:04:59] I had someone over, I was doing a meal prep class, and they use the entire--pretty much the entire container of this spray oil while we were cooking, and there was just grease everywhere in the kitchen. So obviously we know this, we know that it is full of oil. The ingredients are 100% canola oil.

[00:05:18] So no questions with that. The problem that I have though is that it's unlikely anybody would use a serving size. I believe this is a manipulation. So just let's go through the math together on this. The FDA food law States that any serving that is under five calories can be reported as zero.

[00:05:39] So what do these spray oil manufacturers do? They will adjust the serving size down to where it's four calories or lower. And this is my philosophy and I, I believe it's a hundred, a thousand percent true. And in this case, let's kind of go through the math. We're going to make an assumption here, and that assumption is that each serving will be four calories.

[00:06:01] So instead of five calories where they'd have to claim it, we're going to round it down to four. Okay. This way they can claim it zero. If you take that four and you multiply it by the number of servings in the can, which is 1,927 we're going to get 7,708 calories. For the can. All right? So, we know that 3,500 calories are equivalent to a pound of fat, like on our body's calorically wise-- kilocalories.

[00:06:31] So if we take that math and follow it through that 7,708 calories equates to 2.2 pounds of calories in each can. And so plus, really when you spray it, it's obviously oil, but they're allowed to say that it's zero calories. So how can it really, it's the first ingredient listed on the can. And as you know, the ingredients have to be reported or listed in their order of weight, so amount of grams per calorie.

[00:07:01] So if this was the. First ingredient, and there were other ingredients in there and it weighed the most, they'd have to clean this first in that order. So, so we know that too. So, beyond that, it's not just the amount of calories that are in this, but we're talking about the amount of fat calories, and some people are really watching their fats.

[00:07:23] That's very concentrated calories. It's nine calories per gram. So, when the manufacturer States on their nutrition facts label that it's zero total fat, zero cholesterol, a zero saturated fat, that is just absolutely untrue. In fact, one can of Pam has the same amount of fat as 350. One tablespoon servings of whipping cream.

[00:07:49] So that's the amount it is in terms of fat that's actually in that can. So, like, let's just be real about this. The American public is not stupid. Like if we just looked at this and paid attention to it, this is just one example of obfuscation at its finest, right? The second point here is the actual serving size with some of these manufacturers could be unrealistic.

[00:08:13] When most people buy a product in a small package, it could be a drink or a bag of beef jerky or cookies, whatever it might be, and it can easily look like a single serving. And you may check the ingredients and calories for fats and carbohydrates and sugars and sodium and you could say, "Oh, all right, well it's about 120 calories and you know, I know it's a treat. I may know it's not healthy, but I think I could do that". And then you eat the small bag and not realizing you may be getting way more than you bargained for because the number of servings per container has been manipulated. So, one time I bought just a little pack of cookies for one of my kids and I'm looking at the serving size and you know, even though you know it's unhealthy and still look, is that voyeur in me?

[00:08:58] I have to see exactly what I'm, what I'm doing. So, one thing I noticed is that it was 1.3 servings per container for this little packet of cookies, and it just instantly crossed my mind that it really should be one serving. They made at 1.3, to lower some of those ingredients. Say for example, I was willing to feed my child four grams of sugar, but maybe at 1.3 it was going to be five or six grams of sugar, and maybe I wouldn't have bought it. I don't know. You know, I'm just speculating, but basically what that does, when a food manufacturer starts altering the serving size and something that is obviously small and something that obviously the consumer may consider to be one serving. As an assumption, of course. Right? Who wouldn't do that then?

[00:09:47] Then I believe that that is a very deceptive, so you may want to check those things as you're doing it, and it may or may not affect your choice or your behavior, but it's your right to know these things. It's your right to be talked to as an educated consumer. And these may be these adjustments may be, or manipulations may be on a snack package, and it could be on your favorite blended veggie smoothie at your specialty grocer, which is healthy.

[00:10:18] Uh, it also may be on a drink. For example, on a small beverage, and it may have some sweetener in it. So, say, say you just went to the local gas station shop and you were really thirsty and you thought, I'll just get an ice tea. And yes, this one, it says lightly sweetened, and you look on the back and it's 90 calories and you say, okay, great. All right, I will do that. You make that choice based on that, but when you look at the serving size, a little closer could have 1.5 it could have two servings on it. So it is, those are really manipulative, deceptive types of practices that I'm talking about. Some producers are moving to two column nutrition facts panels, which I really like.

[00:11:02] And it shows the breakouts of what might be that entire container. For example, if it's that drink, it'll have one column saying one serving size, and then the second column will say entire bottle or two serving sizes. It will show you what the entire sugar content is, sodium content. Those types of things on the back of the panel.

[00:11:27] I have an enormous amount of respect for that because it is being open and forthright and making it just a little bit more obvious so you can make those better choices.

The third one is minimizing the amount of an unhealthy ingredient, and what this is called is ingredient splitting. And the downside to you is that you really don't know how much of a particular ingredient you're getting.

[00:11:54] So I'll give you some examples here. Food manufacturers can use several types of one particular ingredient to manipulate the order that it appears. So, for example, you may know that there are, and you may have seen there are over 40 different types of sugars, right? So, a food producer can list, date paste, molasses, sugar, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose. There are all different kinds. As consumers, if we're looking at that ingredients, list the list of all the specific ingredients that are in that food product, and we know that they are listed in order of grams, priority in terms of how it appears in that final product by weight, by proportion. Those that have the highest proportion have to be listed first and they are in descending order.

All right, so there was one processed breakfast, pastry, and I'm just going to pick on Pop Tarts because of course they're not healthy. We all know that, but it did a really good job of ingredients splitting, and by good, I mean that a little bit sarcastically. Uh, so their first ingredient is flour and after flour in parentheses, that had this breakout of different vitamins that had been in it, enriched is what they call that. So great. And what that does is it makes the list appear a little bit longer. So when sugar pops up, it's the second item, but it isn't quite so blatant.

[00:13:24] Alright, so the first ingredient is this enriched flour. The second ingredient is sugar, and they've broken it out into four different types. The orders are corn syrup and then high fructose corn syrup, and then dextrose. And then sugar, right? So here we have four different types of sugars. They are all sugar. It all boils down to sugar. And if, I will guarantee this, if you add up the number of grams of the corn syrup, the high fructose corn syrup, the dextrose, and the sugar, I guarantee you it would be heavier in weight than the flour and would have had to have been listed first. This is a way where ingredients splitting becomes deceptive because they're able to push those other ingredients down in their ingredient list,

making it less of a priority and less obvious. I have another example for you, which is Classico pasta sauce. And, this is relatively healthy. It's, there is a little bit of sugar in it and all these ingredients are organic, but you know, organic sugar, non-organic sugar, same number of calories, same impact on how you metabolize it. Same impact on weight, same impact on everything in your body. So, this is an example. And the first ingredient is organic tomato puree and then organic diced tomatoes, tomatoes and then organic tomato juice. We have four types of tomatoes. Now, is this deceptive? I don't think so because it's a tomato! Right? And I think what they're doing is they're using different types of processed tomatoes to make their ingredients work the way they want in terms of texture and consistency and that kind of thing. So I totally get that. Maybe a pricing issue also, I don't know. Not going to assume that. But then after that comes organic sugar, organic onions or organic olive oil dot, dot, dot.

[00:15:27] It goes on. Okay. So, this is an a, this is an example of ingredient splitting, but I don't believe the intent is to deceive anyone. If it was something that was unhealthy, yes. If it was buried, yes. Split to be able to move those ingredients down on the list, perhaps. But these are the first ingredients in its tomato sauce.

[00:15:49] So great. Now as we're going down this path with the Classico pasta sauce, there is another little sidebar here and that is the amount of sugar that's in it. There is a, obviously the organic sugar that is listed and on the facts panel itself, it will say grams of sugar are seven so is that high? How can you tell now the labeling laws that are new and that are in effect? For requiring food producers to update their labels and add a line item for added sugars. You may have heard this already. Now, if the added sugars were listed here, we would have six grams of sugar and one gram of added sugar. And you would never know that I had to actually go in and do a whole breakout of a how much naturally occurring sugar was in the tomatoes.

[00:16:37] So you would never, never know this. So this is a new law. However, companies have a certain period of time to update their nutrition panels and update their packaging. And I believe small companies have a little more time, I think until 2021--I could be wrong about that--but I do know that the larger companies need to be about a year ahead of the smaller companies in complying with this. I'm glad this is a new law for a single ingredient sugars. I think it will help people figure out what is new, what is added, what is not added.

And then, number four, this is a claim, which is the no added sugar claim.

And this gets a little bit tricky because the downside, if some manufacturer says there is no added sugar, it doesn't mean that there's no sugar in that product. It could mean that there's a lot of sugar that they just didn't add any in. So, I'll give you a few examples, and I think the first thing is to understand the laws and how they are able to kind of go around, how they differentiate the different types of sugars. And I, I really feel like it's important to understand this because as a food manufacturer, I have made certain statements as well, and I want to explain those to you in just a little bit, but when we talk about sugar, there is something called naturally occurring sugar.

[00:17:58] And that is sugar in fruit. A tomato is a fruit. When we talked about the Classico tomato sauce, that can certainly be a good example there. We also have sugar alcohols and we have artificial sweeteners. Okay, so all of those things, sugar alcohols are not considered to be added sugars. Artificial sweeteners are not considered to be added sugars either. An artificial sweetener might be like aspartame. There are many, many different kinds of artificial sugars. None of them are really beneficial. That's a whole separate topic, but I just want to call out naturally occurring sugars.

[00:18:37] Those that are in fruit can be a part of and are a part of the total sugars and not considered added sugars. So, an added sugar is when a food manufacturer will add something like sugar or corn syrup or that type of thing that has to be spelled out. It could maybe be molasses, but one thing that I thought was really interesting is a date paste, which is really high in sugar and is pure dates, right?

[00:19:07] So it's really a natural whole food. Many manufacturers will use it in, in products like in a protein bar or protein bites or that kind of thing. Little energy bites. You'll see that quite a bit, but it is really high in sugar, but it does not have to be categorized as added because it is a whole food.

[00:19:27] Now, a single date is 70 to 80% sugar. Isn't that crazy? And if you get a dried date, just imagine the, all the moisture that's pulled out of that, like a Medjool date, it contains 16 grams of sugar and 67 calories. If you eat four, you have 268 calories and 64 grams of sugar. All right? So, 16 grams of sugar per date. And to keep things, I always like to equate things to other foods and, and foods that are familiar is that a date has 16 grams and a Snickers bar has 20 grams of sugar. It has almost as much sugar! And yes, it's natural. But this is really more about how companies have to claim that on their label.

[00:20:14] Okay, so it is high sugar that is just good to know no matter what. If you're looking at a food product and it says it has dates, and dates are used for sweetener, it does not mean that it is a low sugar product just because it's natural. So that is something that we need to look at.

Now, we make that claim of no added sugars. But let me explain this to you. We have a line of protein meal bars and there is sugar in it. For example, our protein bars have no added sugars claimed, but there is naturally occurring sugar in the fruit. I'll take our Spicy Mango Margarita Protein Meal Bar as an example. I'll give you the ingredients in order.

We use whole rolled oats, a protein blend, which is made up of three different types of proteins. I won't go into the details here. A prebiotic, fiber and prebiotic fiber tastes sweet, but it's pure fiber. It does not metabolize and is actually the binder that holds all of the ingredients together. And then we have unsweetened mango, and this is where those naturally occurring sugars take place.

[00:21:19] Flaxseed, wheat germ coconut oil, lime extract. Chili powder salt. And then we have Stevia, Monkfruit, and erythritol, which are all natural. They are plant-based sweeteners and they have no calories and they do not affect the blood sugar. So, the amount of sugar per meal bar is six grams, and that is all from the mango.

[00:21:40] So we do have a line item for it. Added sugars, which is zero now, because the Monkfruit, the Stevia and Erythritol, do not have anything at all, any sugars, it's not listed there. Okay. It is not included because it is zero. So, if for example, I added brown sugar into the recipe, which I would not do, but if I did, I would need to split that out into added sugars.

[00:22:04] And then, we actually moved up the deadline requirement for added sugar being a small company. We did want to claim it because I didn't want people to misunderstand. I look at that six grams or they're six grams of sugar, but I did not want people to mistakenly believe that they were added sugars. So that does make a big difference.

[00:22:24] So when you are looking at any facts, panels, and you're checking them and you're looking for added sugars, the way to differentiate is that you look at total carbohydrates. That'll be a main heading, total carbohydrates. Then there will be underneath that as a subheading, dietary fiber, and those are the fibers that are, that may be soluble or insoluble. So you'll get total fiber, and then under that you'll have total sugars. Under total sugars, you'll see the sugars from fruit and that will include those naturally occurring sugars and also any added sugars, combined. So, if there's a total sugar thing there, what's helpful is if the food manufacturers, if they have included it and updated their panels.

[00:23:14] After that would be a sub category that will say added sugars, and this is where you need to look. So say, for example, that a product had 10 grams of sugar, total sugars, and then under added sugars, you saw that it was nine grams of sugar, so there would only be one naturally occurring and nine added.

[00:23:34] So we want to flip things the other way. We want to make sure that whatever sugars are in those food products are naturally occurring. So, under total sugars and where it says added sugars, we want to try to shoot for one or zero or whatever, but as low as possible. And then that way you'll be assured that you're eating a fairly healthy, relatively healthy product, depending upon all the other ingredients in the fats and if it's whole and that kind of thing. So, hopefully that helps.

[00:23:59] Number five on our list is label padding, and this is where the manufacturer would like you to believe that the food is healthier than it is by using some trendy ingredients in small amounts or ingredients that are considered to be or perceived to be healthy. For example, there was this acai beverage and it was mostly fruit juice.

[00:24:24] But on that front of the label is said Acai Berry juice. And then listed on the ingredient list were all these other types of juices, concentrates, water, different types of things on the ingredient list. But then the Acai Berry was listed absolutely last. This is something that's misleading. It's called label padding and just something to watch out for.

[00:24:48] And lastly, number six, obfuscating the identity of an ingredient for marketing purposes. Okay, what does that mean? All right, so there was an allegation made against Chobani, which as you know, is a really good quality Greek yogurt company. And the FDA was trying to decide whether they specifically had misled consumers.

[00:25:09] There was a situation where the term “evaporated cane juice was” alleged to be false and misleading. And ultimately the FDA didn't make that decision that they had actually misled people, or that it was a false and misleading phrase. But they suggested that the manufacturer should replace the phrase with a single word, which is “sugar”.

[00:25:32] So there you have it. Those are the top six ways food companies will try to distort their products or represent them or misrepresent them for healthy brand marketing. So be sure to subscribe. Please be sure to check out. All my other podcasts are YouTube videos and blogs at www.tonijulian.com thank you for joining me today.

I am sending you a healing energy, prayers, love and hugs for me to you. Until next time, bye bye.

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