



Hype or Helpful? How to Spot Reliable Nutrition Info Online

Nutrition advice is everywhere online. But how do you know what's helpful and what's just hype? Let's break it down so you can separate the reliable from the ridiculous.

Where Are People Getting Their Info?

If you guessed social media, you would be correct! A recent study found that 87% of Millennials and Gen Z'ers rely on TikTok for health and nutrition advice. The problem? Only about 2% of the 67,000 videos analyzed were accurate. That's a 98% chance of being misled by your favorite influencer.

Instagram isn't much better. Influencers are paid to influence—not to provide sound advice. A study of Instagram nutrition posts revealed that 94% were inaccurate, and the vast majority were just ads.

And then there are the viral trends: detox teas, avoiding seed oils like they're poison, or even drinking raw potato juice to 'cure' diabetes (yes, that was a thing). Some of these trends are more than unhelpful—they're harmful. Just because something is trending doesn't mean it's true—or safe.

Red Flags to Watch For

So, how can you tell if a piece of nutrition advice is hype? Here are the key warning signs:

- **Testimonials instead of science:** Just because something worked for someone doesn't mean it's reliable—or safe.
- **Bias and agendas:** Look out for products being sold or overly promotional claims.
- **Scare tactics or pressure:** Words like "toxic" or a hard sell with a ticking clock are big red flags.
- **Dramatic language:** If it's called "revolutionary" or "miraculous," it's probably neither.

And here's a rule of thumb: the more something is trending, the less likely it's true. If these "miracles" were real, we'd all be living as eternally slim, healthy, wrinkle-free versions of ourselves by now.

What Can You Trust?

To navigate the noise, here are a few reliable guidelines:

- Look for articles on .gov or .edu websites.
- Trust content from accredited healthcare professionals (like registered dietitians or PhDs in nutrition) who present a balanced view—not just cherry-picked data, and not selling a specific product.
- Follow the links: credible sources will lead you to actual studies in recognized journals.
- If something seems too good—or too weird—to be true, it probably is.

Your Trusted Sources

Finally, for those moments when you need solid information, here's a list of trusted sources you can rely on (link to cheat sheet).

- National Institutes of Health (NIH) – [Medline Plus](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – [Nutrition](#)
- World Health Organization (WHO) – [Nutrition](#)
- Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health – [Nutrition Source](#)
- Tufts University – [Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy](#)
- Mayo Clinic – [Nutrition and Healthy Eating](#)
- Cleveland Clinic – [Nutrition](#)

By staying alert to the red flags and knowing where to find credible information, you'll be ready to dodge the hype and focus on what's truly helpful.

Access the list above by navigating to dietid.com/reliable-nutrition-information or by scanning the code here.



Sweet Potato and Black Bean Tacos



These tacos are SO quick and easy to make, and packed with protein, fiber, and antioxidants. Make them your own with your favorite seasonings and additional veggies.

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp smoked paprika
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 8 small corn or flour tortillas

Optional Toppings:

- Sliced avocado or guacamole
- Shredded red cabbage or lettuce
- Fresh salsa or pico de gallo
- Lime wedges
- Chopped cilantro

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Toss the diced sweet potatoes with olive oil, chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, salt, and pepper.

Spread them on a baking sheet and roast for 20-25 minutes, until tender and slightly crispy.

While the sweet potatoes roast, heat the black beans in a small pot over low heat. Add a pinch of salt and a splash of water if needed.

Warm the tortillas in a skillet or microwave.

Fill each tortilla with the fillings and your favorite toppings.