

Fitness Truth Behind "Fat-Free" Labeled Foods

You'd think if it says "Fat-Free" on the label, that would mean the contents of the labeled container are . . . well . . . free of fat. It makes sense, doesn't it? Actually, in the wonderful world of food labels, very little makes sense. If you want to learn to truly eat supportively, it's imperative that you become a bit of a label reading detective.

Let's look at a few products to illustrate how the deception can take place.

1. Fat-Free Non-Stick Cooking Spray

This is the one I love to hold up at seminars. The lie is so blatant its comical . . . or . . . in my opinion . . . criminal. I hold up a can of Mazola Non-Stick cooking spray. It says right on the can, "for calorie-free fat-free cooking." I point out how the nutrition label says there are 0 calories in a serving and of course 0 grams of fat. I then read aloud the ingredients. The only significant ingredient is liquid corn oil. I hold up a container of Mazola Liquid Corn Oil. We see a very different nutrition label. This one says 120 calories per serving, 120 calories from fat! It's not only not Fat-Free, it's 100% Fat! Here's how they get away with it . . .

The FDA labeling law says that if there's less than 1/2 gram of fat in a serving, a food can be labeled "Fat-Free." The catch is, nobody regulates what the food companies refer to as a serving size. If you look at the spray can, it refers to a serving as .2 grams. That's 2/10 of a gram. Is there less than 1/2 a gram of fat in .2 grams of fat? Of course! There's less than 1/2 a gram of anything in .2 grams. To show you how absurd that referenced serving size is, .2 grams would equal 1/3 of one second of spray! It's complete and total deception that allows pure fat to be labeled "Fat-Free."

2. Fat-Free Butter Substitutes

There are many butter substitutes claiming to be "better than butter." As an example . . . I Can't Believe It's Not Butter! It says "fat-free" all over it. You know what to do. Go right to the ingredients. Hydrogenated oil. That's fat. Pure fat. Better check out the FDA regulated nutrition label. 5 calories per serving. How many calories from fat? 5! Another example of the reliability of our friends at the FDA in delivering "truth in labeling." I Can't Believe It's Not Butter . . . but it is FAT! As a matter of fact, from a health standpoint, hydrogenated fats are more harmful than the saturated fats butter would provide. That doesn't make butter a good choice, but if you're trading it for something that contains just as much fat but gets its fat from a source that can cause cell damage . . . I'd have to say butter's better.