



The Truth on Energy Bars Expanded!

Robin Walsh BASc, ND

As many of you have already watched, I had the opportunity to do a segment on CTV news on energy and sports bars. Since the aired segment was short, I thought I would expand on what to look for and what to stay away from.

In preparing for this talk, one of the things that I found most interesting is where these bars are located. The bars that I consider “healthy” were found in the health food section of the grocery store...I knew where those were. However, I had to go on a hunt for the other sports bars. You will never guess where I found those...that’s right, the pharmacy aisles. To the average consumer this is very confusing, as how could things in the pharmacy section be THAT bad!

Here are the things that you want to keep in mind when eating these bars

Sugar

All of these bars are going to use sugar, it is just a matter of what type of sugar they are using. The purpose of most of these bars is to act as quick energy for athletics, so they use sugar such as maltodextrin, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup and glucose to provide a powerful punch to the body and give it instant energy. The problem is, these sugars set off a cascade of

reactions in the body that cause things like inflammation and insulin levels to spike. So, while you may be getting a “punch” of energy during your workout, the question is...are you really gaining health? What are these ingredients doing to your body long term? The answer is...nothing good!

Outside of athletics, the average person is using these as a snack thinking that it is a better choice than a chocolate bar. The problem is, the sugars in these bars are broken down and absorbed rapidly making it hard for the body to use all of this energy all at once. Instead, it conserves it for a later date...and it does so as body fat!

It has been shown that foods that contain high fructose corn syrup set off yet another hormonal cascade in the body that actually causing leptin resistance. Big deal! Well leptin is the hormone that is produced by your fat cell to signal your brain when it is full. So, these bars will actually make you feel hungrier causing you to want to eat more and more.

Look for these sugars in products – less inflammatory, lower glycemic index and send good messages to the body

- Dates, figs, raisins
- Agave nectar
- Organic brown rice syrup
- Evaporated cane juice
- Organic cane sugar
- Honey

Fats

Most people know that hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats are not good for you. Long term use of these toxic and inflammatory fats has been linked to things like cardiovascular disease, obesity and high cholesterol.

Manufacturers have now become smarter, and have started using things called modified fats. While these may be better than the hydrogenated/trans fats, they are not much better and have still been linked to chronic disease.

Avoid anything that says – hydrogenated, partially hydrogenated or modified fats

Look for good fats – hemp oil, flax oil

Additives

The old rule applies here...if you can't pronounce something, you probably shouldn't be eating it. Common additives on labels of bars are things like sodium benzoate which can cause skin rashes and aggravate asthma, and sulphites which are known to cause rashes, headaches, trigger IBS and aggravate asthmatic conditions. The other things to watch out for are natural and artificial flavours which are like the "mystery meat" of the additive world.

Calories

A typical snack should be anywhere from 180-220 calories. Most commercial bars are anywhere from 200-300 – so a snack would be ½ bar (**this depends on activity level, and if you are trying to lose or maintain weight). Keep in mind the calories, and how many serving sizes are in a bar (most calories are per bar...but just double check this).

I am not against the use of these bars, I just think people need to be aware what they are eating. Eating the right bar can provide you with a nutritious convenient snack but just make sure that you are eating good quality bars.

Examples of nutritious bars include:

- Lara
- Vega
- Elev8me
- Luna
- Gen Soy
- Think Organic
- Dr Weil
- Perfect 10
- Organics
- Clif

This recipe was already posted, but it provides a great example of a homemade energy bar that can be made at home.

Homemade Nut and Honey Energy Bars

- 1 cup oatmeal 300
- 1 cup granola 300
- ¼ cup sesame seeds 50
- ¼ cup flax seeds 50
- ½ cup wheat germ 100
- ½ cup bran 100
- ½ cup protein powder 20
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ cup maple syrup 400
- ½ cup honey 480
- 1 cup peanut butter 760
- ½ cup pecans 400
- Optional ¼-1/2 cup coconut, raisins, dried fruit

Instructions

1. Grease pan, mix dry ingredients.
2. Mix peanut butter, maple syrup and honey in a saucepan and stir until very hot, but do not boil
3. Pour mix over dry ingredients
4. Press into pan, and let sit 24 hours in the fridge
5. Cut into individual bars, and wrap or store in container in fridge or freezer

Invitation for the Spring Cleanse

Robin Walsh, BAsC, FLT,

Dear Friends, Family, and Patients;

It's that time of year again – Spring! The snow has melted, the sun is growing stronger each day, and the rain is moving in to wash away all the rubbish that has been hiding under the snow for months.

We're all familiar with the idea of “spring cleaning” as it relates to our homes, closets, and garages, but how about spring cleaning our bodies? The change of seasons is the BEST time to cleanse our bodies and get rid of the toxins that have accumulated over the winter. You know how good you feel after your home has gone through a spring cleanse; now imagine how good your body will feel if you did the same for it!

Everyone is in need of a full body spring cleanse. It doesn't matter how well behaved we were this winter we are all exposed to hundreds of toxins everyday, and it's important that we aid our bodies in an annual cleanse to help rid these toxins.

While the body is normally an efficient detoxification machine on its own, the world we live in can put a strain on even the healthiest of us. The build-up of these toxins in the body can lead to a variety of seemingly unrelated symptoms, such as, fatigue, headaches, malaise, irritability, mood swings, bloating, insomnia, and muscle and joint aches or pains.

While we may have limited control over our environment, we have a great deal of control over our bodies. There is enormous value for your body in a spring cleaning.

In recognition of this important practice my partner in Vibrant Living , Kristijana Rakic, N.D. and I have paired up with two other health conscious organizations from the community – Moksha Yoga Waterloo and Seven Shores Urban Market and Café - to deliver a well-planned and organized two week 1st Annual Community Wide Spring Cleanse in the K-W area.

You know you need it! We know this isn't the first time you're heard about cleansing or detoxifying. So, if it's your first cleanse or if it's a part of your regular lifestyle, please join us in the exciting event. Everyone is welcome, and you do not have to be a patient of ours to participate so invite your family and friends along!

Please visit our web site, at www.vibrant-living.ca to learn more about and to register for KW's 1st Annual Community Wide Cleanse.

We look forward to having you participate in this exciting event!

In Good Health,

Robin

Winter Stew

Robin Walsh BASc, ND

I got this recipe out of Clean Eating Magazine. It is great because it uses seasonal vegetables for the winter. Enjoy

Serves – 8

Prep Time – 35min

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup of amaranth flour (or flour of your choice)
- ½ tsp sea salt
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- 1 tbsp of crumbled dried oregano
- 1 tbsp crumbled dried basil
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 large sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- 4 cloves of garlic (chopped, or passed thru garlic press)
- 2 carrots peeled and chopped
- 4 stalk of celery chopped
- 2 turnips peeled and chopped
- 2 sweet potatoes cut into cubes
- 1 cup of chestnuts, chopped
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 cups of vegetables broth
- 3 lbs of bison, chicken cut into cubes. Or, better yet...replace this with beans!!

Instructions

1. In a container with a lid, place flour, sea salt, pepper, oregano and basil.
2. Put the lid on the container and shake.
3. Add the chicken/bison or beans and shake.
4. Set aside
5. Heat 1 ½ tsp of olive oil (you can use the more stable coconut oil as well – better for heating) in a large skillet and set over medium heat.
6. Remove meat cubes/or beans from the herb mixture and place in the skillet.
7. Place the meat in a slow cooker, and add the remaining ingredients – mix gently.
8. Set to high and cook covered for 6 hours

Vibrant Living Seminar Series

For all of those people that would like to lose more weight, need to get re-motivated, or just want to a refresher on how and why we need to take care of our bodies we have the course for you.

I have teamed up with another lifestyle and nutritional focused ND in the area, Kristijana Rakic and we started a 6 week seminar series on how to live optimally through lifestyle modification.

Topics include detox, stress management, nutrition (including recipes, the how and why to eat well), and exercise to name a few.

New streams of the series start every 2-3 weeks and run for 1.5 hours each week.

All this for the low price of \$199 that is reimbursable through most extended health care plans.

We have received great feedback on the series so far, and look forward to helping you achieve great results!

<http://www.vibrant-living.ca>

Vibrant Living

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