

Beware of these 5 'healthy' foods

By Xavier Bazin

Antoine C., a long-time friend, invites me to dinner. I arrive at his house and, as soon as I am seated, he offers me some
I bought them with you in mind".

I almost fell off my chair.

He may have read my letters and been interested in nutrition, but he was convinced that it was a 'healthy' product...

...even though it is a very bad food for your health! (It has a record high glycaemic index of 85, which means it spikes your blood sugar).

That's why I've decided to make a list of so-called "healthy" foods to be wary of.

It is very serious. As the story of Richard Gelfond shows, it is sometimes a matter of life and death.

In hospital because he wanted to eat healthily!

Richard Gelfond is the current CEO of IMAX (giant cinema screens).

A sportsman, he has always been in good health. But in the early 2010s, he was struck by strange symptoms.

His sense of balance starts to fail. And his condition gradually worsens... until he can no longer cross the street without outside help!

His doctor ran all the usual tests, but found nothing wrong. He then consulted a second one, who was just as powerless. Then a third, then a fourth... The best doctors in the country! But to no avail.

Finally, he has a lead: an in-depth analysis reveals an abnormal level of mercury in his blood, 12 times higher than the norm! Mercury is a poison, classified by the WHO as one of the 10 most toxic substances in the world, particularly for the brain.

And where did all that mercury come from? The answer may surprise you: it came from the *sushi* he had been eating every day for years!

Yes, Richard Gelfond was concerned about avoiding junk food (hamburgers, pizzas, crisps) and thought he was doing his health the world of good by eating this Japanese dish made from raw fish and white rice every day.

Contrary to popular belief, sushi is anything but "healthy". In Japan, it is a festive dish that is eaten once a month, and certainly not every day!

In fact, it is a very salty dish, which is sorely lacking in vegetables, and is too rich in fast sugars (those of white rice).

Surprisingly, however, it is mainly fish that can be a problem.

In theory, fish is a wonderful food, with its lean protein, minerals and omega-3. Except... the reality today is that our oceans and seas are incredibly polluted (I explained this in detail in **my letter on fish**).

As a result, depending on where they are caught, oily fish (such as salmon) can concentrate a staggering number of chemicals (PCBs, pesticides, medicines).

Worse: all fish contain significant amounts of mercury. Predators, such as tuna and swordfish, can even concentrate frightening amounts!

And this is how Richard Gelfond poisoned himself slowly, when he thought he was optimising his health. Today, he is much better, but he still hasn't recovered all his faculties... and he will probably never be able to run again.

This is a good reason to be better informed about what you eat!

So, apart from sushi, here are the top 5 'healthy' foods to watch out for:

1. Industrial 'gluten-free' products

This is a trap that is easy to fall into: since gluten is a protein that is best avoided, gluten-free products must be good for you, right?

Well, no, not at all: gluten-free junk food is still junk food!

However, 95% of industrial gluten-free products, even 'organic' ones, are nutritionally catastrophic.

They usually contain huge amounts of rice flour, corn starch, potato starch or glucose syrup... in short, ingredients that make

Explode your blood sugar levels, with all the associated risks: weight gain, diabetes, accelerated ageing, etc.

And I'm not talking about the preservatives, thickeners and other chemicals that most industrial products *with* or *without* gluten are full of.

My advice: eating gluten-free is a good thing, especially if you suffer from intestinal disorders or autoimmune diseases. But you should give priority to *real* food (vegetables, fruit, etc.),

meat, fish, nuts, etc.), unprocessed by the food industry.

If you buy *industrial* gluten-free products, it is very important to read the list of ingredients carefully. Personally, the only products of this kind that I sometimes buy are :

- Organic aperitif biscuits made from almonds, egg whites and roasted vegetables: all highly recommendable foods, and an acceptable level of total sugar (17 g per 100 g);
- Organic buckwheat sourdough breads, mainly made from buckwheat flour.

2. Sunflower, corn and grapeseed oils (even organic!) !)

In the 1970s, the health authorities made an inexcusable mistake. They told everyone to stop eating butter and replace it with vegetable oils such as sunflower. It's 'better for your heart', you were told at the time.

As a result, too many people still believe that these are "healthy" products to be preferred. But the opposite is true: sunflower oil should be avoided at all costs.

The reason is simple: it contains a catastrophic proportion of omega-6 fatty acids, which are pro-inflammatory and cause obesity, diabetes and heart disease^[1] when consumed in excess!

Just one figure should convince you: we now know that the ideal omega-6 to omega-3 ratio for health is 3:1. But sunflower oil has a ratio of 71:1, corn oil 57:1... and grape seed oil, which is very fashionable, 72:1!

My advice: Avoid industrial oils that are unbalanced in omega-6, as well as margarines that contain them. But don't put all vegetable oils in the same bag!

On the contrary, several of them are among the most beneficial foods in the world for your health. This is the case with olive oil (packed with precious anti-oxidants) and rapeseed oil, rich in omega-3: enjoy 3 tablespoons a day, without the slightest guilt!

3. Fruit juices (even 100% fruit)

I'd rather reassure you right now: if you like to squeeze an orange every morning, or if you add a berry or two to your vegetable juice, there's no need to change your habits.

But you should know that a big glass of orange juice in the morning is not "healthy".

The worst, of course, are juices with added sugar. Researchers at Harvard University have found that sugary drinks (sodas and sweetened fruit juices) are responsible for 133,000 deaths from diabetes, 44,000 deaths from cardiovascular disease and 6,000 deaths from cancer. ^[2]

But even "100% fruit" juices are not ideal.

Firstly, because juices make it difficult to realise how much sugar you are taking in: did you know that a single glass of orange juice contains the sugar of two oranges?

But above all because the sugar in juices is much "faster" than in whole fruit.

When you eat your fruit whole, the fibre in it has the advantage of 'slowing down' the passage of sugar into your bloodstream. Conversely, when you drink the juice of the fruit, without the fibre, your blood sugar rises sharply, fatiguing your pancreas and causing all sorts of long-term cellular damage.

My advice: Don't hesitate to eat whole fruits but avoid juices, which are too often just "liquid sugar". Your favourite drink should always be water, either plain or as an herbal tea.

If you like juices, treat yourself to vegetable juices, which are much less sweet. To tell you the truth, every morning I make my wife and myself a big juice made of cucumber, courgette, carrot, fennel, avocado, and ginger... delicious and full of vitamins!

4. Low-fat" dairy products "

If you have been reading Professor Joyeux's recommendations for a long time, you know why you should be wary of milk:

- It causes digestive damage and damages the state of your intestinal flora if, like 41% of the French population, you are lactose intolerant;
- Contrary to what the dairy industry has been trying to tell you for the past 50 years, milk does not make your bones stronger at all^[3] ;
- The bovine hormones in cow's milk (estrogen, progesterone and insulin) are useful for the health of the calf, but problematic for your body;
- The growth factors (IGF-1) in cow's milk are suspected of feeding cancer cells - and indeed, heavy milk consumers have a higher risk of prostate cancer. ^[4]

In short, dairy products are definitely not "our friends for life".

But I would like to alert you more specifically to the problem of "industrial" milk, which can be found in supermarkets.

As you can imagine, the cows that produce this milk are not fed on the good grass of green pastures. Instead, they are fed soya meal and oil cakes (a by-product of the oil manufacturing industry).

The problem is that not only are these feeds unsuited to the cows' bodies, but they also unbalance the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio of the milk they produce. It increases to 20 to 1, whereas a

Natural" milk is more like 4 to 6 to 1 - I remind you that the ideal is 3 to 1.

In addition, the 'pasteurisation' of milk (cooking at very high temperatures), degrades the vitamins A, B, C and D contained in raw milk, as well as many of its natural enzymes.

Finally, "semi-skimmed" milk poses the same problem as all "low-fat" products.

The advantage of fatty products is that they make you feel full quickly. On the other hand, when you take 'low-fat' products, you tend to be hungry... and consume even more carbohydrate-laden foods (such as bread or pasta), which do not 'calm' you down and make you fat!

This is why, according to a recent study, those who drink whole milk have a significantly lower risk of developing diabetes than those who drink 'low-fat' milk. ^[5]

For the same reason, avoid low-fat yoghurts: they almost always contain added sugar, without which they would be inedible!

My advice: if you can do without milk, you'll be healthier. But if, like my mother, you love this beverage, try to limit the quantities.... and find a producer who will offer you raw milk, from grass-fed cows, without pesticides or antibiotics!

As for yoghurts, if you eat them, I recommend *plain* soy yoghurts (without added sugar) and *organic* yoghurts (to avoid pesticides and dangerous additives like calcium phosphate).

5. Wholemeal bread

Wholemeal bread is often thought to be a healthy food because it contains the right amount of fibre, vitamins and minerals.

But it is often forgotten that its glycemic index is as high as white bread (around 70), which makes it as 'fast' as table sugar! ^[6]

And that's not all. Wholemeal bread also has other rather disturbing defects:

- It is too salty: with 250 g of wholemeal bread (the equivalent of a baguette), you generally have the maximum amount of salt recommended by the WHO (5 g/day/person).
- Unless it is made with ancient flours (small spelt, etc.), it contains too much gluten, a protein that can damage your intestine;
- It also contains too much acrylamide (a carcinogenic substance), pesticides (when not organic) and phytic acid (an anti-nutrient that prevents the absorption of essential minerals like zinc). In short, this is another so-called "healthy" food that should not be abused!

My advice: if you prefer wheat-based bread, choose organic wholemeal sourdough bread, which limits most of the defects mentioned above. But ideally, aim for gluten-free breads made from millet or buckwheat flour.

What "healthy" foods do you recommend avoiding?

I could also have talked to you about brown sugar (just as bad as white sugar!), or agave syrup, which is full of fructose and should therefore be **avoided like the plague**.

I could also have warned you about breakfast cereals, most of which are sugar bombs.

As you can see, the list is long, and I have probably forgotten some. Xavier

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