

'Diet foods' to skip

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(HealthDay)—Certain packaged foods marketed as "lite" or "diet" versions may not be helping your weight-loss efforts or your goal to eat healthier.

Here are 5 to cross off your shopping list.

- Rethink your drink and skip the [diet soda](#). Research done at Purdue University shows that drinking lots of soda with [artificial sweeteners](#) can boomerang and cause weight gain and even diabetes. Opt for water or herbal tea to stay hydrated and curb appetite between meals.
- Skip all diet foods that replace fat with sugar, like low-fat cookies. Keep in mind that even healthy-sounding foods like no-fat yogurt can be guilty of this unhealthy switch if flavored with sugar-added fruit.
- Ditch the reduced-fat peanut butter, which replaces good-for-you mono-unsaturated fats with sugar. Opt for regular, no-sugar-added peanut butter—just watch portion sizes because it's calorie-dense.
- Margarine is often marketed as a good substitute for butter, but the ingredients in stick margarine are hardly healthy. The better alternative to both is extra virgin olive oil.
- Multigrain bread sounds great, but unless it's made from a variety of whole grains, you're getting refined flours without the original nutrients or the appetite-satisfying effect of fiber. Ditto with granola, which also has lots of carbs (often from added sugars), but not necessarily whole grains.

To shop smart, always read the labels on all packaged [diet](#) foods to see whether high-fat, high-calorie ingredients were replaced with healthy ones.

More information: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has details on how to choose all types of [processed foods](#), both good and not-so-good ones.

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