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Are There Hidden Carcinogens in Nature Valley Products?

By Deborah Oke | February 4th, 2017

You've likely seen Nature Valley products on the shelves of your local grocery store or convenience store. Or maybe you even have some in your kitchen cupboard right now. This subsidiary of food giant General Mills cultivates the image that they provide nutritious snacks and breakfast foods to meet the busy lifestyle demands of most Americans. Whether you are going to school, work, or athletic activities... Nature Valley has a "healthy" snack to keep your energy high. Or at least, that's what they want you to believe...

The product images on the package certainly look appealing, but how do you feel after you've eaten these foods? Sluggish, hyperactive, or left with a stomach ache? The sad reality is that processed foods often have labels that boast of great health benefits when in reality these products are often highly toxic and even carcinogenic.

Let's take a closer look at some of the "Red Flag" ingredients found in Nature Valley products.

Nature Valley Granola Bars

The Claim:

Nature Valley® Oats 'n Honey Granola Bars combine real honey and rolled oats, to produce a sweet, wholesome snack. The bars are full of classic crunch and whole grain goodness, providing energy to help keep you going. Bite into one anytime, anywhere for an invigorating treat of quality whole grain. Packed in two-bar pouches, Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars offer a crunchy, sweet taste you can take anywhere. 16g of whole grain per serving. At least 48g recommended daily.

Red Flag Ingredients:

Sugar, Corn Syrup, Rice Flour, Palm Kernel Oil, Vegetable Glycerin, Mixed Tocopherols, Maltodextrin, Fructose, Canola Oil, Soy Lecithin

How These Ingredients in Hidden Valley Granola Bars are Harmful

Palm Kernel Oil

Palm kernel oil comes from the African Palm tree and is abundantly produced in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Central America. While some palm kernel oil is responsibly sourced, in other cases valuable rain forest is being destroyed which is affecting our ecosystem.

Because palm kernel oil and palm oil are naturally free of trans fats, inexpensive, and have a longer shelf life, they have become the chosen preservative fat for processed foods. However, if they are modified or partially hydrogenated (as they usually are in processed foods), then they become harmful trans fats. These trans fats have a variety of negative health implications that include suppressing the satiation center in the brain that tells you to stop eating. This negatively affects your perception of hunger which can lead to unwanted weight gain.

Rice Flour

The nature of growing rice in rice paddies, which are mostly water, lends itself to inorganic arsenic being readily absorbed by the rice plant. This allows for high levels of inorganic arsenic to be present in the grain. When you consume products with rice flour, rice starch, and rice syrup you are multiplying your potential dose of arsenic.

The side effects of arsenic include: cancer of the skin, kidneys, bladder, and lungs. It is not an immediate effect, but over time the risk becomes greater. Since the rice products are in so many processed foods the accumulation of poison can add up quickly, exceeding acceptable levels.

Canola Oil

Canola oil is made from the rapeseed plant. This is a plant that is genetically modified to survive after being heavily sprayed with toxic herbicides (Monsanto's Roundup) to control weeds. These toxins are absorbed into the plant and follow them into the processing of their oils and then into your food. Once these toxins get inside your body they can lead to conditions such as leaky gut and even cancer.

If that's not bad enough, the high temperatures and hexane (a petroleum-based carcinogenic substance) used for extracting the oil create trans fats which increase bad cholesterol and decrease good cholesterol. Acrylamides are also created in this process

and cause the infiltration of free radicals – adding even more to the cancer risk.

Then the oil has to be bleached and deodorized which further adds to the chemical cocktail and toxicity of the product. Your safest bet is to avoid all canola oil and vegetable oils.

Mixed Tocopherols

Tocopherols are a preservative made from more than one type of vitamin E – which is good if these vitamins are organic and not chemically extracted. Organic vitamin E that is especially high in gamma Tocopherols is very healthy – but what are the chances of getting that ratio in food preservatives on a mass scale? Pretty unlikely. It is more likely (since they don't specify), that you are getting mostly the cheap alpha Tocopherols from either synthetically-produced sources of petroleum or from genetically-modified grains like corn, cottonseed, and soy.

Hidden Valley Protein Bar

The Claim:

Nature Valley® Coconut Almond Protein Bars combine roasted peanuts, almonds and toasted coconut flakes to create delicious chewy and gluten free snack with a satisfying crunch that is packed with 10g of protein.

These are supposed to attract health conscious individuals and those that want to build muscle tissue. The body building industry is a big deal to young teenage boys (and men and women of all ages). But this is hardly your best source of protein. Take a look at the ingredient list here: mostly sugar, fried nuts, and some potentially dangerous protein powders which I will discuss in detail below.

Red Flag Ingredients:

Whey protein concentrate, Soy Protein Isolate, peanuts, palm kernel and palm oil, canola oil, nonfat dry milk, soy lecithin, Maltodextrin, sodium caseinate, sugar, corn syrup, tapioca syrup, fructose, vegetable glycerin, rice starch, rice Maltodextrin

How These Ingredients in Hidden Valley Protein Bars are Harmful

Peanuts

Peanuts are legumes, not nuts. They have a soft permeable skin and grow underground which makes them vulnerable to contamination by various toxins. (They are also prone to

salmonella.) One of the most common toxins is mold that produces aflatoxin. Aflatoxin is a carcinogen that affects the liver, preventing it from burning fats and detoxifying the body.

Another toxin is fungicide residues that come from heavy spraying to prevent mold from damaging the peanut crops.

Peanuts also contain an anti-nutrient called lectin. This prevents the absorption of important minerals including iron, copper, magnesium, and calcium.

Furthermore, peanuts are pro-inflammatory from two sources:

1. The lectins, a sticky protein, bind with sugar to produce an inflammatory response inside the cells. They are also an insulin mimicker which accelerates the production of fat in the liver.

2. The other inflammatory generator comes from the high level of omega-6 fatty acids.

All in all, peanuts are not a good food choice. Raw almonds and walnuts are healthier, promote balanced blood sugar, and feed the brain with healthy fats.

Non-fat Dry Milk

Once again processing is the major culprit destroying food products. Skim milk is forced through tiny holes at high temperatures and pressure. This causes the milk to become oxidized which in turn produces nitrates. Nitrates from oxidation at high temperatures produce carcinogens that can lead to stomach, colorectal, and esophageal cancers. This process also converts healthy cholesterol into oxidized cholesterol which irritates blood vessels and creates plaque arteriosclerosis – that leads to heart disease.

The orotic acid that's found in powdered milk causes the liver to produce too much fat. So if you are trying to lose weight, don't use low fat milk products (including skim milk, 1%, and 2% milk) or low fat anything because most of these products contain worse ingredients than the natural ingredients.

Whey Protein Concentrate

Dr. T. Colin Campbell wrote a book titled "The China Study" with the results of many clinical trials proving that casein, a whey protein, has the intrinsic mechanisms to increase and decrease cancer growth. In his research studies he found that the more casein his subjects consumed the larger the cancer cells became and vice versa for reduced levels.

Other chronic conditions were also observed including: weight gain, kidney stones, liver malfunctions, arterial plaque, and reduced bone density.

With direct links to prostate cancer, why is whey protein such a popular bodybuilding supplement? I believe it is linked to the media-promoted paradigm that we need large amounts of protein to be healthy. People do not realize how much protein is contained in natural whole foods, especially vegetables and leafy greens. These are safe sources of protein if they're organic and prepared with their enzymes intact. Too much protein can cause many of the previously listed health issues and processed foods add to the mayhem.

Sodium Caseinate

Industrial casein is made from super pasteurized milk. The process of extraction is called isolate and is accomplished through acid washes and high heat. After that it becomes insoluble in water so they process it again to make it water soluble which further alters the protein turning it into an MSG (monosodium glutamate). The chemicals used to isolate it remain in the protein mix which damages the protein even more. What you're left with is sulfuric acid or hydrochloric acid residues and MSG.

This combination contributes to colon cancer, digestive disorders, and respiratory tract problems. MSGs are also anti-nutrients that prevent the absorption of important minerals in the body. So instead of a protein supplement to build muscle tissue, MSG is a carcinogenic powder that prevents you from absorbing important nutrients. It also harms your respiratory system which is vital to your health.

Soy Lecithin

Soy lecithin comes from the dehydrated sludge left over from refining genetically-modified soybean oil. Side-effects include inflammation, bloating, diarrhea, skin rashes, nausea, stomach pain, and breast cancer due to an increase of estrogen mimickers and more. This explains why babies on conventional formulas can become aggressive and have behavior problems.

A study published by "Food and Chemical Toxicology" states that the research found soy lecithin to be highly estrogenic. This explains the increased number of individuals with chronic fatigue which directly affects the thyroid gland's production of hormones. Hormones are vital for proper digestion, energy production, and metabolism. Therefore, it is recommended to avoid all products containing processed soy and soy lecithin.

Soy Protein Isolate

Soy protein isolate is made from soybeans through an extraction process that separates the protein from the remaining components of the soybean. According to Soyfoods Association of America, soy protein isolate is 90% protein and nearly carbohydrate and fat free.

This process does not however remove the negative aspects of genetically-modified soy. The source of soy protein is genetically modified to withstand heavy spraying of Roundup, the herbicide containing glyphosate.

Glyphosate contains phytic acids that demineralize the body thus being categorized as an anti-nutrient. Not only does it leach minerals, but it blocks very important mineral absorption including magnesium, iron, calcium, zinc, and copper.

These minerals are vital for oxygenated blood, bowel movements, bone health, and overall metabolic health. The side effects of glyphosate are numerous and affect men, women, and children – especially infants and fetuses in the womb.

Moreover, it is an endocrine saboteur whereby it interferes with the production of natural estrogen by introducing estrogen mimickers that are known carcinogens causing breast, uterine, cervical, and prostate cancers. Glyphosates increase the risk of infertility, breast cancer, uterine cancer, prostate cancer, endometriosis, and placenta destruction leading to fetal death.

Another hormone mimicker in soy are isoflavones, which contain goitrogens. These inhibit thyroid function causing mood swings, insomnia, anxiety, and chronic fatigue. Eventually they lead to thyroid, stomach, liver, and esophagus cancers.

Genistein and daidzein are phytoestrogens in soy that cause enlarged breasts in men and women, mood swings, crying spells (men and women), reduced sex drive, and impotence.

To make matters worse, the process of creating soy protein isolate includes washing the soy protein in an acid solution in aluminum tanks. This in turn leaches aluminum into the soy isolate product. Even small amounts of aluminum in your food accumulates in the body and is linked to Alzheimer's, aggressive and antisocial behaviors, mental issues such as brain fog, inability to concentrate, learning disabilities, and dementia.

Some hidden names of soy products include: soya, Mono-diglyceride, textured plant protein, natural flavors, bullion, lecithin, textured soy protein (TSP), textured vegetable protein (TVP), and MSG.

On the other hand, if organic soy is properly fermented it is an inhibitor of these chemicals and thus it is safer to consume.

Soy

Soy in general is not a healthy food according to clinical studies. It is believed to be a major factor contributing to digestive disorders, malnutrition, thyroid dysfunction, cognitive problems, cancer (especially breast, prostate, and uterine), and other chronic

illnesses.

This is because soy is susceptible to carrying xenoestrogens – aka environmental estrogens. These come from plastics, tap water, herbicides, and pesticides. They are endocrine disruptors which is the reason for the diseases mentioned above. The endocrine system controls the hormones which are the messengers for our core physiological systems' proper functioning. This is the reason we see so many health problems in our world – and they are directly attributed to processed, mass produced foodstuffs that were not meant to be consumed by humans.

Nature Valley Nut Bars

The Claim:

Nature Valley® Almond, Cashew and Sea Salt Simple Nut Bars are our simplest bars yet! Just 7 gluten free ingredients – They're that simple (and delicious). Boasts No High Fructose Corn Syrup and Gluten Free

Red Flag Ingredients:

Tapioca syrup, sunflower oil (hydrogenated), roasted nuts, and seeds

How These Ingredients in Hidden Valley Nut Bars are Harmful

Tapioca Syrup

Tapioca is made from the roots of the cassava plant and is considered a natural sweetening alternative. This is because it doesn't spike blood sugar as quickly as refined sugar. They use manufactured enzymes to digest the complex carbohydrates in the root vegetable to make it sweet. The question is, are manufacturers using GMOs to accomplish this task cheaply? So even here there is a possibility that you are getting hidden microorganism GMOs. Manufacturers like it because it is also a nice filler for their products. Nature Valley wants you to believe that using healthier ingredients makes them healthy – but too much of any sweetener is not a good thing.

Roasted Nuts

Roasted nuts are created by cooking raw nuts in vegetable oils at high temperatures. The by-product of this process is acrylamides which are carcinogenic due to their introduction of free radicals into the body.

The nutrients are also destroyed at these high temperatures as are the enzymes needed to

digest the nuts. So, the body has to rob metabolic enzymes and convert them to digestive enzymes to get the job done. This causes that sleepy feeling you get when you eat over-cooked foods.

Further, the body then reacts to these non-food items with an immune response while actively working to get rid of the invader. So you don't get much benefit from these "health" bars. Yes, they are gluten and high fructose corn syrup-free, but even that advantage can't overcome these other serious health hazards.

Nature Valley Biscuits

The Claim:

Each biscuit has a delicious crispy texture and 100% natural whole grain oats combined with the goodness of almond butter. With 14g of whole grain per serving, Nature Valley® Biscuits with Almond Butter provide nutritious energy to help keep you going any time of the day.

Red Flag Ingredients:

Sugar, Maltodextrin, mixed Tocopherols, tapioca syrup, canola oil, palm oil, corn starch, and natural flavors

How These Ingredients in Hidden Valley Biscuits are Harmful

Natural Flavors

"Natural flavors" are just MSGs in disguise. The problem with monosodium glutamate is it belongs to a larger category of excitotoxins. Just as it sounds, this is a toxic substance that excites the brain cells, specifically in the hormone control center, the hypothalamus. This small area of the brain is responsible for controlling many of our vital functions hormonally. When this is damaged, sudden death can occur, as well as cancer, obesity, neural disorders, and a multitude of serious health issues.

According to Dr. Russell Blaylock, these nerve stimulants cause a vicious chain reaction in the nervous system to be repeatedly activated, or excited, and doesn't stop until the cells die from overstimulation. These toxins are added to processed foods to enhance the flavor – but the damage they inflict is criminal.

Maltodextrin

Companies such as Nature Valley are happy to use this genetically-modified starch

derivative because it's not classified as a sugar. Therefore they can claim low sugar or no sugar on products, when in reality the GI (glycemic index) is twice as high as sugar. Glycemic index is a measure of how your blood sugar will rise after eating a food. Even though Maltodextrin is not technically a sugar, it has a glycemic index of a whopping 130 while white sugar looks like a hero in comparison with a score of 65.

Foods with a high glycemic index cause a huge spike in blood sugar levels resulting in heightened levels of insulin. This is a recipe for disaster. Think: hormone imbalance, circulation of bad estrogens, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, infertility, increased risk of heart attacks, and strokes.

Furthermore, your body will store this as fat in your liver and sugar feeds the bacteria and tumors. It also creates more problems for your GI tract and healthy gut bacteria (probiotics).

Any food that claims to be part of a healthy diet should not contain even a pinch of this substance. And yet we find this ingredient in almost every food on the market. It's even in kids cereals (including Muesli), which gives kids a higher risk of obesity, diabetes, and cancer.

Toasted Oats

Although the company itself will not tell you how the oats are processed, coming from General Mills you can expect that they will probably process the oats in a similar fashion as their food giant buddies. Recently Quaker Oats came under fire for the chemical glyphosate found in their oats.

Also, a study conducted in Stockholm, Sweden found acrylamides in oats – including lower levels in some steel cut oats. This tells us that if steel cut oats can contain low levels of acrylamides, then surely processed oat based products from Big Food will have levels higher than the “safe” standard.

Unfortunately, all the Nature Valley products in this article contain processed oats.

In Conclusion

Nature Valley's products that boast “healthy” snacks and cereals are far from the standard of health we demand for our family. As you can see, every product has red flag ingredients that lead to compromised immunity, fatty liver, obesity, endocrine disruption, neural disorders, and many cancers.

No wonder so many children are obese and acting out. Their brains are being fed toxic substances that cause serious malfunctions. Thankfully we know the culprit. Now we can

take further action by boycotting harmful processed foods and opting for whole, organic, plant-based foods. It seems to me that's the only solution because once you start processing foods, it changes them into "non-foods" that are full of toxic substances.

The good news is that more people are waking up and banding together to fight a destructive system. Class actions are cropping up everywhere to let Big Food know we want REAL FOOD. In the meantime, however, stick to real, whole foods and prepare your snacks at home whenever possible.