

Wellness Roundup

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BE A FOOD DETECTIVE! TIPS FOR MAKING SMART CHOICES IN THE GROCERY AISLE BY DEBBIE ALEMAN, C.P.T.

Nutrition & Wellness Committee Lang Ranch PTA

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Helpful Websites:

- ◆ NourishInteractive.com
Fun nutrition games for kids, interactive activities, and nutrition tools for parents.
- ◆ KidsHealth.org
KidsHealth is the most-visited site on the Web for information about health, behavior and development from birth through the teen years.
- ◆ MyPyramid.gov
Featuring lots of information on eating a balanced diet and the importance of daily exercise.



A trip to the supermarket is no longer a simple thing. From the produce section to the frozen food aisle, the modern supermarket is filled with over 50,000 food choices, all touting health claims and images geared to influence your food choices. “*Wholesome*”, “*Natural*”, “*Fat Free*”, “*Heart Healthy*” ... It’s hard to know what to buy! Many of the claims used are misleading and many are unregulated, so your best defense is to ignore the pretty packaging and marketing ploys on the front of the box. Flip that package over and look at the *real* facts- the **Nutrition Label**. Here are some tips on what to look for to make the best choices for you and your family.

SERVING SIZE: At the very top of the label is the serving

size. This is the most important piece of information, because all the other nutrition information is based on this amount. This also one of the first places we get misled. Don’t assume that what appears to be a single serving package actually is—often a drink or packaged meal contains 2 or more servings. Check the ‘**Servings Per Container**’ right below the Serving Size listing and be honest about the amount you will actually consume. Calculate your nutrition stats based on your real world serving.

CALORIES: Next up on the facts label is calories. This represents the total calories in ONE serving of the food or drink. If you are watching your weight this is the most important number to consider, because if you consume more

calories than you expend, you will gain weight.

TOTAL FAT: Next on the list is the total amount of fat in 1 serving. This number is an important factor to consider for good health, but the more critical information is what follows. Nutrition labels are required to list the *type* of fat: Saturated, Trans Fats, and Unsaturated Fats. Avoid foods that are high in saturated fats, since this type of fat is known to increase your LDL or “bad” cholesterol, which can lead to heart disease. You should also avoid foods with any trans fats listed on the label, or with the words ‘partially hydrogenated’ listed in the ingredients. Trans fats not only increase your LDL cholesterol, but also *decrease*

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BREAKFAST CEREALS FOR KIDS...

the Good, the Bad and the Sugary! By Lisa Ross

Breakfast cereal marketed for children is a big business. Cereal manufacturers know that parents want something healthy but also know the kids have to love the taste, texture and appearance. They will put large, sometimes misleading terms on the front of the box, such as “low-fat,” “wholesome,” “low sugar,” or “multigrain” to sway your choice. According to the Diet Channel, the first place your eyes should look on that box is the side panel where the

Nutrition Facts Label and ingredient list is.

The three most important things to look for in a breakfast cereal, according to Superhealthykids.com are:

- 1) Less than 4 grams of sugar per serving.
- 2) At least 4 grams of fiber per serving.
- 3) Presence of whole grains.

As far as sugar goes, high fructose corn syrup is the most unhealthy and should be avoided. Better sugars include: brown rice syrup,

barley malt syrup, date sugar, honey, maple sugar, stevia and unrefined cane sugar. These sugars are absorbed more slowly into the bloodstream and will help to avoid the sugar rush-and-crash.

Cereals high in fiber will help a child feel full longer. Some good key ingredients to look for are: whole grains, psyllium, oats, 100% whole wheat or bran, oat bran and barley.

Consumer Reports and Associated Content each have their own “Best and Worst List” for breakfast cereal, so here is a

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BREAKFAST CEREALS FOR KIDS . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

combination list from both:

WORST (*having more than 30% sugar and less than 3 grams of fiber per serving*): Kellogg's Honey Smacks, Fruit Loops and Frosted Flakes, Post Golden Crisp, General Mills Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, and Apple Cinnamon Cheerios, Trix and Apple Jacks.

BEST: Cheerios (original), Honey Nut Cheerios, Multi Grain Cheerios, Life, Kix, Barbara's Bakery Puffins (original and cinnamon), Spoon Size Shredded Wheat, Nature's Path EnviroKids Penguin Puffs, and Kashi Organic Promise (cinnamon harvest and autumn wheat.)

There were two cereals that were on a sort of "in-between" list: Kellogg's frosted bite size mini-wheats are high in sugar (12 grams per serving) but the fiber content is excellent at 6 grams per serving. While Rice Krispies are low in sugar, they have almost no fiber to speak of. To put it all in perspective; the two worst cereals on the Consumer Reports list have as much sugar

per serving as a glazed doughnut!

The Diet Channel recommends mixing half of a favorite sugary cereal or one low in fiber with a new healthy whole grain choice to ease the transition into a healthier breakfast. After researching this article, I started mixing half corn flakes, (my kids' favorite but low in fiber), with Golden Flax (higher in fiber), both from Trader Joe's. It worked! At first they resisted the new high fiber cereal intruding on their corn flakes, but eventually grew to like the crunch it provided. Also, be sure to take notice of the serving size listed on the box. Most cereals list a 3/4 cup serving, while most kids tend to pour twice that amount! Have your kids pour themselves their usual serving and then pour it into a measuring cup to see what their actual serving measures out to be. Make sure you calculate the nutrition stats based on your kids' real eating habits! Try using smaller bowls or use a 1-cup measuring cup to scoop cereal out of the container to help keep your portions healthy.

As we all know, breakfast is such an important meal to start our kids' day of learning and playing. On a busy school day morning, cereal is a popular choice. Have fun experimenting with new combinations that your kids will love!



****For more healthy breakfast ideas, please refer to Debbie Aleman's article "Start Your Day Off Healthy" in our March 2007 edition of the Wellness Roundup, which is available on our PTA website. Just log onto www.LangRanchpta.org, click on the 'Other PTA Services' link, go to 'Nutrition & Wellness' and open 'March 2007'.**

The Fact and Fiction about Sugar & Sugar Substitutes

By Melissa Dorval, Registered Dietician

As I write this article, we have just headed back to school. What coincides with back to school is the daily routine of packing our children's lunches. Now, wouldn't it be wonderful to pack our children organic, homemade, delicious lunches each day? Well, if I know our community as well as I think I do, we are all very busy Mom's and Dad's. We try to feed our children a (somewhat) healthy breakfast in 5 minutes flat and make sure they do not forget their lunches before we rush out the door, five days per week. I know that many rely, at least somewhat, on prepackaged foods when packing lunches. If you do so I would highly suggest reading labels, comparing products for the amount of saturated and trans-fats, sugar, fiber and nutrients to make your best choice. Many individuals have inquired as to my viewpoint on artificial sweeteners. Instead of giving you my opinion, I thought I would give you some facts and allow you to make your own decision for you and your little ones.

If you are a label reader, you will note that there are many different types of sweeteners which come as traditional table sugar, honey, fruit juice concentrates, artificial sweeteners Splenda (sucralose), Equal (aspartame), Stevia to name a few,

and sugar alcohols, and what the media has often attacked, High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS). Did you know that on average, we consume around 100 lbs of sweeteners per person, each year... *that's right, 100 lbs!* Sugar, which includes table sugar, honey, corn syrup as well as maple syrup, is a carbohydrate which contains calories and will therefore affect blood glucose levels. These sugars need to be considered as part of one's daily carbohydrate and caloric intake, particularly if you or your children are diabetic or have insulin sensitivity or are concerned about weight gain. Further, these sweeteners are often found in beverages that we send to lunch with our kids, as such need to be accounted for as part of the daily caloric intake or amount of sugar they are ingesting. Ideally we should only be sending our kids to school with drinking water, which may be a challenge. My daughter recently started enjoying her new BPA free water bottle, pink of course, and is drinking more water than ever because of her fun new bottle. Be mindful regarding the "waters" put out by Capri Sun and others. Although they may have less sugar from their high sugar originals, many have high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). HFCS is less expensive than sugar and is now the leading sweetener in

packaged foods and beverages. The potential concern over HFCS is that it is metabolized almost entirely in the liver and is more likely to result in the creation of the fats that increase the risk for heart disease. Further, HFCS affects the digestive system hormones which control appetite, decreasing your brains message that you are full. You therefore have a greater feeling of hunger, even though you may have a full stomach. This of course can lead to consuming more calories than your body requires, and therefore undesirable weight gain.

Artificial sweeteners are chemicals or natural compounds that offer the sweetness of sugar without the calories. Because they are much sweeter than sugar, it takes a much smaller quantity to create the same sweetness. They are often used as part of a weight-loss plan or as a means to control weight gain. At the end of this article you will find a chart listing the Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) of some of the most common artificial sweeteners. These sweeteners have been approved by the FDA. However, note there is controversy over the use of many of these sweeteners. For example, there are some

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Help Your Child Avoid Common Sports Injuries

By Lisa Noack, C.P.T. and Certified Youth Fitness Trainer

Participation in any sport, whether it's recreational bike riding or flag football, can teach kids to stretch their limits and learn sportsmanship and discipline. Although all sports carry the potential for injury, knowing the causes of sports injuries and how to prevent them can help make athletics a positive experience for your child.

Kids can be susceptible to sports injuries for a variety of reasons, particularly those younger than 8 years old, because they are less coordinated and have slower reaction times as they are still growing and developing. In addition, kids mature at different rates. Often there's a substantial difference in height and weight between kids of the same age, so when kids of varying sizes play sports together, there may be an increased risk of injury.

As kids grow bigger and stronger, the potential for injury increases, largely because of the amount of force involved. Also, kids may not assess the risks of certain activities as fully as adults might so they unknowingly take risks that can result in injuries. **Here are some tips to help your child avoid common injuries:**

• Use of Proper Equipment

It's important for kids to use proper equipment and safety gear that is the correct size and fits well. For example, kids should wear helmets specifically for baseball, softball, bicycle riding, or hockey. For racquet sports and basketball, ask about any protective eyewear, like shatterproof goggles, and ask your child's coach about the appropriate helmets, shoes, mouth guards, athletic cups and supporters and padding.

Protective equipment should be approved by the organizations that govern each of the sports. Hockey facemasks, for example, should be approved by the Hockey Equipment Certification Council (HECC) or the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Bicycle helmets should have a safety certification sticker from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Also, all equipment should be properly maintained to ensure its effectiveness. In the United States, the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) sets many of the standards for helmets, facemasks and shin guards, and you can check these out online.

• Maintenance and Appropriateness of

Playing Surfaces

Check that playing fields are not full of holes and ruts that might cause kids to fall or trip. Kids doing high-impact sports, like basketball and running, should ideally do them on surfaces like tracks and wooden basketball courts, which can be more forgiving than surfaces like concrete.

• Adequate Adult Supervision and Commitment to Safety

Any team sport or activity that kids participate in should be supervised by qualified adults. Select leagues and teams that have the same commitment to safety and injury prevention that you do. The coach's philosophy should promote players' well-being. A coach with a win-at-all-costs attitude may encourage kids to play through injury and may not foster good sportsmanship. *This is very common!* Be sure that the coach enforces playing rules and requires that safety equipment be used at all times and that your kids are matched for sports according to their skill level, size, and physical and emotional maturity.

• Proper Preparation

Just as you wouldn't send a child who can't swim to a swimming pool, it's important not to send kids to play a sport that they're unprepared to play. Make sure that your child knows basic fundamentals of the sport before going out on the field. Your child should be adequately prepared with warm-ups and training sessions before practices as well as before games.

Dehydration can occur before you or your child is aware of it so make sure he/she drinks plenty of fluids before during and after the activity. Your child should also be allowed to rest during practices and games.

Here are some common types of sports injuries in children:

• Acute Injuries

Acute injuries occur suddenly and are usually associated with some form of trauma. In younger children, acute injuries typically include minor bruises, sprains, and strains. Teen athletes are more likely to sustain more severe injuries, including broken bones and torn ligaments. Acute injuries often occur because of a lack of proper equipment.

• Overuse Injuries

Overuse injuries occur from repetitive actions that put too much stress on the bones and muscles. Although these injuries can occur in adults as well as kids, they're

more problematic in a child athlete because of the effect they may have on bone growth.

All kids who play sports can develop an overuse injury, but the likelihood increases with the amount of time a child spends on the sport.

Some of the most common types of overuse injuries to keep your eyes out for are:

- **Anterior knee pain:** Anterior knee pain is pain in the front of the knee under the kneecap. The knee will be sore and swollen due to tendon or cartilage inflammation. The cause is usually muscle tightness in the hamstrings or quadriceps, the major muscle groups around the thigh. Stretching these muscles helps reduce the likelihood of this problem occurring.
- **Little League elbow:** Repetitive throwing sometimes results in pain and tenderness in the elbow. The ability to flex and extend the arm may be affected, but the pain typically occurs after the follow-through of the throw. In addition to pain, pitchers sometimes complain of loss of velocity or decreased endurance.
- **Swimmer's shoulder:** Swimmer's shoulder is an inflammation (swelling) of the shoulder caused by the repeated stress of the overhead motion associated with swimming or throwing a ball. The pain typically begins intermittently but may progress to continuous pain in the back of the shoulder.
- **Shin splints:** Shin splints are characterized by pain and discomfort on the front of the lower parts of the legs. They are often caused by repeated running on a hard surface or overtraining at the beginning of a season.
- **Spondylolysis:** Spondylolysis often results from trauma or from repetitive flexing, then overextension, twisting, or compression of the back muscles. This can cause persistent lower back pain. Spondylolysis is commonly seen in kids who participate in soccer, football, weight lifting, gymnastics, wrestling, and diving.

Although injuries are bound to happen much can be done to prevent them.

Have fun, play safe and hope your fall season is a healthy one! *Lisa Noack*



Sugar and Sugar Substitutes (continued from page 2...)

references that have shown that Aspartame (Equal/NutraSweet) may be a factor in ADD, hyperactivity, cause headaches and various other neurological problems in children. The main concern over Aspartame is for individuals born with a rare genetic disorder called phenylketonuria or PKU. These people cannot break down (metabolize) the amino acid phenylalanine. This amino acid occurs naturally and is found in aspartame. PKU is usually detected in babies by a routine blood test at birth. People with the disorder are placed on a phenylalanine-restricted diet and must avoid aspartame. *(Per the American Cancer Society: Current evidence does not demonstrate any link between artificial sweeteners and an increased risk of cancer.)*

Another sweetener that has been getting a lot of attention lately is Stevia. Stevia (brand name Truvia, Sun Crystal and others) is the newest FDA approved sweetener. It was approved in December 2008, however prior to it's approval to be used in foods, it was available as a "dietary supplement". Stevia is a naturally sweet plant, native to South America that has been used for centuries to sweeten food and beverages. It is about 300 times sweeter

than sugar and contains no calories or carbohydrates. Some have found this sweetener to have a bitter flavor. Sun Crystal, combines both Stevia and table sugar, which they claim to have a better taste. I looked at the FDA's website and the best information I could find was an ADI of 4 mg/kg/body weight for Stevia.

As discussed, artificial sweeteners may be helpful for controlling weight, however, there is some school of thought that if you use these sweeteners, they may cause one to crave more sweets. I hope this article has given you some education regarding the variety of artificial sweeteners out on the market and has not caused more confusion as there is a vast amount of information available on this subject. As I started this article by stating I was not going to make a specific recommendation, what I would like to suggest is that you consider using these artificial sweeteners in moderation, particularly with your children. *If you have any questions about this article or have suggestions regarding future nutrition articles, please drop me an email at dietmdrd@hotmail.com.*

*I would love the feedback!
Melissa Dorval, R.D.*

Below is a chart listing the ADI per kilogram body weight. Note that the Estimated ADI equivalent is an adult recommendation (for someone with a body weight of 150 lbs):

Artificial Sweetener	Acceptable Daily Intake* (Equivalent)
Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal)	50mg per kilogram (18-19 cans of diet cola)
Saccharin (Sweet'N Low, Sugar Twin)	5 milligrams per kg (9 to 12 packets of sweetener)
Acesulfame K (Sunett, Sweet One)	15 milligrams per kg (30-32 cans of lemon-lime soda**)
Sucralose (Splenda)	5 milligrams per kg (6 cans of diet soda**)

*FDA-established ADI limit per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of body weight.

**These products usually contain more than one type of sweetener. (Mayo Clinic)

NOTE: All these sweeteners are OK for cooking with the exception of Aspartame.

Comfort Food Made Healthier- Macaroni & Cheese By Lisa Ross

This recipe is tried and true. I have made it for block parties, adults and children of all ages— Seconds are almost always asked for!

INGREDIENTS:

- ¾ of a 16 ounce bag of either whole wheat rotelle or whole wheat penne pasta (whole wheat macaroni is very hard to find- these shapes work great and are readily available at Trader Joe's)
- 1 (15 ounce) container of part skim ricotta cheese
- 1 medium container of low fat cottage cheese
- 1 ½ pounds sharp cheddar, grated (Try using reduced fat cheddar- experiment to find which brands melt the best.)
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons salt

DIRECTIONS: Preheat oven to 350°.

Boil noodles until al-dente, drain and set aside. In a food processor, grate cheddar and set aside (or grate by hand.) If using a food processor, switch to blending

blade and blend eggs, ricotta, cottage cheese and salt until it looks like a smooth paste, only about 20 seconds. (Or you can mix all by hand but it will be a chunkier texture.) Transfer paste into a large bowl and fold in grated cheddar and cooked noodles. Pour into a 9 x 11 baking pan sprayed with cooking spray. Bake for 45 minutes or until top becomes slightly browned and sides are bubbling. Remove from oven and let cool for a few minutes before serving.

This freezes really well in individual size portions wrapped in plastic wrap and then foil. To defrost just remove wrapping and put back in the oven or microwave. You can also improve the nutritional content of this family favorite by adding chopped broccoli, or if your kids are on the lookout for those 'Green Things' you're always trying to sneak into their food, you can add chopped cauliflower. With all the cheesy goodness going on here, I'm sure no one will complain!

Enjoy! Lisa Ross

Wellness Roundup Highlights

Helpful articles for the holiday season from past issues.

Here is a collection of articles from our past 3 years of the 'Wellness Roundup' newsletter. We hope you will find them helpful and informative as we head into the busy holiday season.

There are tips to avoid holiday weight gain... and if those don't work, there are tips to help you lose weight in the New Year! We also have lots of fun ideas to keep your family active over the winter break, tasty recipes, and advice on how to teach altruism to your children during this season of excess.

You can find all the past editions of the 'Wellness Roundup' on our PTA website. Just log onto www.LangRanchpta.org, click on the 'Other PTA Services' link, then go to 'Nutrition & Wellness'. Each edition is listed with a full Article Index, so it's easy to find the article or recipe you're looking for. We also have our 'Family Health Challenge' from last year's Green Ribbon Week. Try using the Challenge to help jump start new healthy habits for your family in the New Year... or any time of the year!



ACTIVE FAMILY FUN

- Fitting in Fall Fitness, October '07
- Active Gift Ideas, November '08
- Fun Family Fitness, December '06
- Active Family Fun Around Town, December '06

RECIPES

- Spinach Artichoke Dip, Nov. '08
- Zucchini Muffin Recipe, Oct. '06
- Banana Bread Recipe, Dec. '06
- Healthy Family Dinner Recipes, October '07
- Healthy Recipes for School Celebrations, March '07
- Healthy Snacking, Nov. '08
- Healthy School Lunches, Oct. '06



LIFESTYLE TIPS

- Holiday Eating Survival Guide, December '06
- Reaching Your Weight Loss Goals, December '06
- How to Beat Cold and Flu Season, December '06
- Strategies for Raising a Healthy Family, October '06

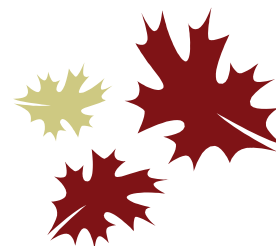
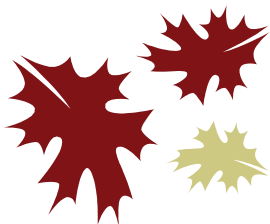
OTHER INTERESTING ARTICLES

- Teaching Altruism to Children, December '06
- Tips to Make Your Holiday Greener, November '08
- Save the Planet- Bring Your Own Bag!, March '08
- 10 Tips to Promote Kids Health, March '07

All of us on the Nutrition & Wellness Committee wish all the kids, families, and staff of Lang Ranch a wonderful holiday season!

Make sure to take the time to appreciate the simple moments in our lives that mean so much. Focus on the many things you are grateful for, spend time with the people you love, and slow down long enough to truly enjoy this special time of year.

In good health..



KID'S CORNER

HOW ARE YOU TRYING TO BE MORE "GREEN" ?

Here are some of the things our Wranglers are doing to help save the planet...

"Being healthy and taking care of the world" Nick, 4th grade

"Recycle and turn electronics off every night" Mike, 5th grade

"Don't use so many plastic water bottles" Kaitlyn, 5th grade

"Turning off the lights and TV when I leave the room" Matt C., 2nd grade

"I help take out the trash at home. I make sure the recyclable trash go in the gray barrels."
Scott P., 3rd grade

"By picking up trash everywhere!" Ajay, 1st grade

"Pick up trash!" Lily R., 2nd grade

"Recycle bottles and paper." Sona, 3rd grade

Katelyn knows her three "R's" ... but to preserve our resources it's not "Reading, Writing & Arithmetic!" Of course those are very important, but so are these...

"Reduce, re-use and recycle." Katelyn R., 4th grade

Reading Nutrition Labels...continued from page 1

your good HDL cholesterol! **Unsaturated fats**, like mono- and polyunsaturated fats, are known to be heart healthy and can help lower your LDL and increase your good HDL cholesterol. Remember, unsaturated fats are still just as caloric as the unhealthy fats, so try to limit your consumption to 25-30% of your daily calories.

SODIUM: Too much sodium can increase the risk of hypertension (high blood pressure), which is one of the leading causes of heart disease. Look for packaged foods that contain 5% or less of the Daily Value of sodium. Foods that are often high in sodium are canned soups and vegetables, deli meats and tomato products, like canned tomatoes, pasta sauces and ketchup. Look for lower sodium versions of packaged foods and rinse the liquid off of canned beans and vegetables to lower their sodium content by up to 40%!

DIETARY FIBER: Nutritionists say we should consume at least 25 grams of fiber a day~ most people get barely half that amount! When shopping for breads, grains and breakfast cereals, choose brands with *at least* 3 grams of fiber per serving. Whole grains are an important source of fiber, but

fruits, vegetables, beans and nuts all contribute healthful fiber to your diet.

SUGARS: Many packaged foods contain sugar in a variety of forms including HFCS, fruit juice concentrate, honey, molasses, corn sweetener and words ending in "ose", like dextrose and sucrose. Select items lower in added sugars since high sugar foods are quickly digested and cause our blood insulin levels to spike.

% DAILY VALUE (DV): This tells you what percentage of a nutrient is in each serving, based on the recommendations for a 2000 calorie diet. Don't focus too much on these numbers, just be aware that if a food has only 5% or less of the daily value, it's considered low in that nutrient. If it has 20% or more, consider it high. Look for low DVs for saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. Look for high DVs of fiber, Vitamins A, D and C, potassium, calcium and iron.

The last thing that is key to read is usually found right below the Nutrition Facts Label~ it's the **Ingredient List**. Look for lists that are short and filled with items you recognize and can pronounce~ your ingredient list should read more like a recipe than a science experiment. Items are

listed in order of descending weight, so the first few items are the most prominent ingredients to be considered when making your decision to buy a product. The less processed the food, the fewer chemicals and preservatives it has, making it a healthier choice in most circumstances.

Making your own meals from healthful ingredients is a great way to save money and improve your health. Informed grocery shopping is a time investment well spent to ensure that you are spending your food dollars on products that will benefit your family's well being and long term health. Shop for quality over value, try to fill your cart with whole foods (no label reading required!) and eat a variety of foods to guarantee you're consuming adequate amounts of the many vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that comprise a healthy diet.

I'll help you sort fact from fiction regarding many of the common health claims you find on food packaging in our next issue of the Wellness Roundup.

Until then... Happy, healthful shopping!

Debbie Aleman