

What's really in my Parfait?

Too often, we don't plan ahead and our next meal is completely controlled by outside factors, of which you may have no control; so we succumb to temptation and hunger.



By Dan Young



in this case, I purchased a parfait which was offered by who else? Starbucks.

One of my tricks of controlling what goes in my body is to identify every ingredient that I'm going to swallow; remember, "you are what you eat but more importantly, you are what your food eats", I think I coined that phrase, but again, I digress. I picked up the parfait; yup, it had thawed strawberries and blueberries, so far so good, yogurt - vanilla, simple and light and granola - full of oats and other unidentifiable toasted elements of good health. Awesome, one of my 7 meals was in the bag -literally.

So we think the name alone implies something is healthy. Parfait, that sounds healthy right? Granola - healthy, yogurt - healthy, strawberries and blueberries - healthy again. Sounds like Bill Murray in Ground Hog Day....What could go wrong? Now, let me show you precisely what I read on the label: Low Fat Yogurt - Low Fat Milk, Sugar, High Fructose Corn syrup, Whey protein Concentrate, Food Starch Modified, Natural Flavor, Non Fat Milk, Citric Acid, Gelatin, Whole Grain Oats - Sugar, Canola, Crisp Rice, Soy Protein, Rice Flour, Soy Protein Concentrate, Sugar Malt, Salt, Honey, Brown Sugar Syrup, Soy Lecithin, Baking Soda.

Hmmm, sound like minimally processed whole-foods to you? Now let's break those ingredients down and see what this parfait really is made of. I have a system for grading ingredients. I call it

the good, bad and ugly. The "Good" are foods minimally processed and as close to whole-foods as possible. The "Bad" are foods that may be processed, but most accepted processes are natural method. The "Ugly" are foods (correction - consumables) that have no place in our diets.

LOW FAT YOGURT

Low fat Milk, Sugar, High Fructose Corn Syrup, Whey Protein Concentrate, Food-starch modified, Natural Flavor, Non Fat Milk, Gelatin, Citric

GRANOLA

Whole Grain Oats, Sugar, Canola, Crisp Rice, Soy Protein, Rice Flour, Soy Protein Concentrate, Sugar Malt, Salt, Honey, Brown Sugar Syrup, Soy Lecithin, Baking Soda

I count 22 ingredients, of which 8 are deemed good, 5 are bad and 8 are ugly. Hmm, I don't think I like those odds. Now, granted, some of the "good" depending on the processes used to create them might be okay, but the reality is, all the ingredients listed one could question their source and the methods used to process them.



THINGS TO CONSIDER

Recently, I flew to Atlanta to open what turned out to be our 1,000th juice bar; hurray! But that's beside the point. During my trip, I decided to acquire a parfait from a kiosk within the Philadelphia terminal. Each time I fly, I pride myself in bringing with me 6-7 meals so that I do not have to depend on luck to provide quality nourishment and I can eat every 2.5 hours. On this trip, as I flew out the door at 4:30 a.m. late for a flight, I left my meals in the fridge; ugh!

Too often, we don't plan ahead and our next meal is completely controlled by outside factors, of which you may have no control; so we succumb to temptation and hunger. In these "rare" situations I try to make logical healthy choices. And so

Eat well and remember, you are what your food eats!

Dan Young is President and CEO of Performance Food Centers, Corp. He is certified in personal training, sports nutrition and is a triathlete. He has competed in Body Building as well as Endurance Sports Activities. Accomplished in juice bar concept and design, he applies this knowledge to whole-foods nutrition and the efficiency to serving them.