Iowa State University

From the SelectedWorks of Sarah L. Francis

September 1, 2007

Nutrition Quackery—Wading through the science

Sarah L. Francis, *University of Wyoming*

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/sarah_francis/11/

References:

Anderson J & Young, L. *Nutrition Quackery*. Source: www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09350.html Accessed on: 1/8/2007

Bergeron, E. (Nov 2003). "Setting the record straight on nutrition misinformation." Tufts Daily

Sarah L. Francis, PhD, MHS, RD
University of Wyoming
Cooperative Extension Service
Assistant Nutrition and Food Safety Educator
Carbon and Albany Counties

September 2007

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Glen Whipple, director, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

Persons seeking admission, employment, or access to programs of the University of Wyoming shall be considered without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, political belief, veteran status, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact their local UW CES Office. To file a complaint, write the UW Employment Practices/Affirmative Action Office, University of Wyoming, Dept. 3434, 1000 E. University Ave., Laramie, Wyoming 82071.

NUTRITION QUACKERY

Wading through the science

September 2007 MP-121.2

Nutrition quackery is misleading information about nutrition and health. There are many reasons why nutrition quackery is common, including too many people claiming to be nutritionists without proper training, research articles that are not reviewed by other scientists, and too few laws governing dietary supplements. All open the door for information that is not credible.

Protecting yourself from nutrition quackery is important. Look for the "10 red flags of junk science" and question the information or product in which you are interested. Please use this information to protect yourself.

10 Red Flags of Junk Science

1. Promises of a quick fix.
2. Extreme danger warnings from a single product or regimen.
3. Claims sounding too good to be true.
4. Simple conclusions drawn from a complex study.
5. Recommendations based on a single study.
6. Dramatic statements that are not supported by reputable scientific organizations.
7. Lists of "good" and "bad" foods.
8. Endorsements made to help sell a product.
9. Recommendations based on studies published without scientific review.
10. Recommendations ignoring differences between individuals or groups.

Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

For more information about nutrition quackery, go to www.quackwatch.com

Questions to ask yourself when looking at health information, products, and advertisements

1. Are immediate, easy, or guaranteed results promised?
2. Does the advertisement contain words like "breakthrough," "miracle," "special," or "secret"? *These words are directed toward your emotions.*
3. Is the product or service a "secret remedy" or a recent discovery that cannot be found anywhere else?
4. Is the product suggested for stress or being promoted as "natural"? Does it claim it will help "detoxify," "revitalize," or "purify" your body?
5. Is the product advertised as being helpful for a wide variety of ailments? *The broader the claims, the less likely they are to be true.*
6. Are endorsements, testimonials, or case histories of patients who have been "cured" offered? *Do not base your decision on these alone.*
7. Are vitamin and mineral dose recommendations greater than the Daily Recommended Intakes (DRIs)? *If so, check with a medical provider to make sure they are safe.*
8. Is the product being sold by a self-proclaimed "health adviser"? *If so, insist on professional credentials that are nationally recognized, such as a registered dietitian (RD).*
9. Does the sponsor claim to have a cure for a disease (e.g. cancer) that is not yet understood by medical sources?
10. Is guilt or fear used to sell the product?
11. Does the advertisement claim Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval? *If in doubt, ask for the FDA proof of product listing.*

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact a University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service Nutrition and Food Safety Educator.