

# Fat Is Back And Diet Food Is Out!



By Ruth Kava — October 13, 2016



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For years - no, make that decades - we've been warned about the dangers of dietary fat. It has too many calories, it leads to high cholesterol and heart disease, too much can cause obesity, and on and on. But lately we've been told that the sugar industry ("Big Sugar"?) had a hand (or perhaps an underhand) in demonizing fat so that sugar might be used to add flavor to otherwise not-so-yummy low or no fat products. There's been a fair amount of research lately that focuses on the possibly deleterious effects of too much dietary sugar, leading to various movements to tax or otherwise inhibit sugary beverages in particular.

Apparently such occurrences are having impacts on consumers' dietary choices, perhaps not for the better.

What could be better for a dieter than non-fat yogurt? It's got good dairy protein, is often supplemented with vitamins A and D, and can contain supposedly beneficial probiotic bacteria. But light and non-fat yogurt sales have been [declining](#) [2] of late — dropping over 8 percent in the last year. It's not that people aren't buying yogurt — they are — but the preference differs by age. Older folks (the 65+ crowd) are still getting the lighter variety, but young families with kids are opting more for organic varieties — apparently they've bought the Kool-Aid that organic is somehow "healthier."

Further, a survey by Mintel reportedly [found](#) [3] that among 2,000 respondents, over 90 percent didn't describe themselves as dieters, and nearly 80 percent said they didn't think diet products were as healthy as they claim to be.

Okay, so what might these trends or perhaps I should say changes in emphasis, mean for fighting the obesity epidemic? Are we going to go back to our Big Macs, milkshakes and full fat-but-no-

sugar everything? That is probably not a prescription for success, since even if dietary fat isn't the villain we have thought it was, it still really does have more than twice the calories than protein or carbs, on an equivalent weight basis.

Anytime the Zeitgeist is that any one nutrient is either a miracle cure or a root of all evil, it's probably wrong. People have lost weight using all sorts of variations in foods and nutrients. Rather than follow the fads, it would be more useful to learn to incorporate reasonable amounts of fat and sugars in one's diet — and to first determine the appropriate number of calories one should consume to either lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

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[1] <http://www.shutterstock.com>

[2] <http://www.businessinsider.com/millennials-are-killing-light-yogurt-2016-9>

[3] <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/01/20/462691546/as-diet-foods-tank-confusing-health-labels-replace-them>