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Nutrition: Experts and the Public Disagree

A recent New York Times survey compared the survey results of nutrition experts, including me, with the public's opinions. Some differences make sense—others, not so much.

When asked whether a food was healthy, experts said foods high in fat and/or sugar were generally not healthy. The greatest differences were in granola, granola bars, and frozen yogurt with over a 30% difference between experts, who thought they were not healthy, and the public who thought they were.



What surprised me was that experts viewed coconut oil as not healthy while the public indicated it was healthy. The only thing that makes sense is that the experts were strictly evaluating coconut oil as a saturated fat; they did not seem to consider that it contains medium-chain fatty acids, which have some health benefits.

There was also a disagreement between whether the respondents had a healthy diet or not. Experts said they selected mostly nutritious and healthy food; the public said they selected some healthy foods but could do better. That seems to make sense: experts should do what they say.

When it came to diet, only 4% of the public use the Mediterranean diet while 25% of nutrition experts said they use it. That's interesting because the Mediterranean diet has the most research to suggest it's healthy; it has certainly been in the press.

I'll finish on Saturday by examining how experts and the public responded to questions on nutrition information. There are some interesting agreements that surprised me.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

Reference: <http://nyti.ms/29jE12>

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