

FOOD MATTERS

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DRESSING UP SUMMER SALADS

Dressing Up Summer Salads

With the hot weather upon us, delicious, cool salads are a way to eat more healthy, nonfattening vegetables. But watch out. You could be drowning your low-fat salad with “hidden” fats in dressings, and reducing its healthy nature by adding extra salt. The key is to be label savvy, or better still, make your own dressings.

Commercial Dressings

Endless varieties of ready-to-pour dressings exist, but many are high in fat and salt. Some provide the body’s total salt requirement for the day in as little as two tablespoons.

“Free”-labelled salad dressings can range between about 97 and 100 per cent fat-free, and usually contain less sodium. “Light”-labelled varieties fall somewhere between the regular and the “frees” with respect to nutritional content. Sugar is commonly used to replace fat, and may be the most prevalent ingredient in a commercial dressing.

If you are a strict vegetarian, then read the ingredients list carefully, as egg, honey or milk solids may be included.

DIY Dressings

Fat free. Mix lemon or lime juice with chopped, fresh herbs, such as parsley, coriander or dill. If you prefer vinegar, try apple-cider or raspberry, or buy one that’s already herbed, such as tarragon vinegar.

Mediterranean. Use extra virgin olive oil mixed with lemon juice, and sprinkle the dressed salad with freshly roasted pistachio nuts. Both nuts and olive oil are widely used in countries around the Mediterranean, and are rich sources of antioxidants.

Creamy. Choose a low-fat but stirred yoghurt. These are creamy, and don’t separate like the set variety. Mix in a small clove of crushed garlic and a small amount of finely chopped mint. This creamy, low-fat dressing marries well with cucumber. It can also be used for dips.

Turn to page 48 for some super dressing recipes.