

Hot Topics

What's buzzy in the world of natural health

Monk Fruit Has a Moment

As the ketogenic diet continues to rise in popularity among Americans, more people are adding sugar to their “forbidden foods” lists. But for those keto followers with an insatiable sweet tooth, safe, natural sweeteners are in high demand. While stevia and xylitol have been hogging the spotlight in recent years, the lesser known monk fruit is now stealing the show. Monk fruit is the name of a small green melon grown in Thailand and China. It earned its moniker because it was first used by Buddhist monks in the 13th century. In 2019, monk fruit extract is available for purchase in powder form, making it perfect as a sugar replacement when baking your favorite keto treats. But consider yourself warned—this zero calorie, zero carb extract is said to be 150-250 times sweeter than regular table sugar!



The Avocado Era

Is the clean eating world obsessed with avocados? It certainly seems that way. The fleshy green fruit is a social media starlet, continuing to dominate Facebook and Instagram feeds with photos of avo-centric healthy eats, including avocado toast, avocado ice cream, and yes, even avocado coffee. A healthy, nutrient-dense addition to sandwiches, smoothies, and salads, the amazing avocado can also hold its own as a main course. Its rich, buttery texture and high content of healthy fats make it a delicious, highly satisfying, guilt-free indulgence. In a recent analysis of the UK's most Instagrammed foods, avocado placed near the top of the list at #2, second only to the popular Indian spice, curry. Yes, avocado love is still a real thing. It's just plain cool to love this hot trend.



Oodles of Zoodles

Life without pasta can feel underwhelming, but for individuals following low carb, clean eating diets—or for those with gluten sensitivities or celiac disease—noodles are a big no-no. Enter zucchini noodles, or “zoodles,” a low-calorie, highly satisfying pasta alternative. People love zoodles because, in addition to containing fewer calories than traditional pasta, they up your vegetable intake for the day and offer some select nutrients not found in ordinary noodles. Many supermarkets across the country are offering freshly spiraled zoodles in their produce departments, but you can also whip some up at home with a DIY spiralizer. While zucchini is the original inspiration for zoodles, you can get creative with veggie noodles made from butternut squash, sweet potatoes, carrots, and even parsnips.



CBD-Infused Everything

The health benefits of CBD are cropping up everywhere these days, promoting this compound from the hemp plant's ability to manage everything from pain to anxiety to post-traumatic stress disorder. And consumers are eating it up—sometimes literally. CBD is finding its way into snack foods, desserts, water, and even alcoholic beverages. While people seem to love CBD for its miraculous health promises, the FDA is still working out the regulatory kinks on managing it in the marketplace. So while the CBD trend seems to be going gangbusters at the moment, regulation issues may cause a slowdown sooner than you think. ■

