Keep Your Calorie Info Off My Candy

greatist.com/eat/why-I-dont-want-to-know-whats-in-candy

March 26, 2018

Easter is a time when I let my kids attack marshmallow Peeps before breakfast, the holiday when I discovered the utter betrayal that is white chocolate—it was a big, delicious-looking white bunny that didn't seem evil at all; I learned otherwise—and when everyone in my house hands over their black jellybeans for my enjoyment. Easter = candy. And now the National Confectioners Association wants to ruin it.

How? By making me an informed consumer. Its new initiative pledges to ensure that "by 2022, half of [participating manufacturers'] individually wrapped products will be available in sizes that contain 200 calories or less per pack." OK, that might not be such a bad idea—and it looks like I'm not alone there. NCA says "85 percent [of parents surveyed] say that individual packs and fun-size packages will influence the type of Easter treats they purchase." But then, the killing blow: "Ninety percent of their best-selling treats will have calorie information printed right on the front of the pack."

No, National Confectioners Association. It's candy. Ignorance is bliss here. There's a line in the musical Hamilton that "no one really knows… how the sausage gets made." The (correct) implication is that we don't really want to know, either.

ADVERTISING

inRead invented by Teads

I don't want to know that I've just consumed the equivalent of a half-marathon's worth of calories in a single Cadbury Crème Egg. One of the super-helpful moms in my running group already did this with Thanksgiving, generously sharing an infographic that laid out how many miles one would need to undertake to burn off X-number of pie slices. It didn't make me not eat pie. It just made me mad that I couldn't relax and enjoy it.

Credit: Kelly Roberts, SheCanAndSheDid.com
Pin it

Lest you think this is limited to Thanksgiving—you know, when I'm thankful that I can run and then I'm thankful that I can eat—there's a similar offering for Easter.

Pin it

(Although, really, running 26.2 miles and then eating five chocolate bunnies and drinking a bottle of wine seems somewhat ill-advised to me anyway.)

But now the venerable Easter basket is in similar jeopardy, and I want to stick my fingers in my ears and sing "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" while having someone toss malted eggs into my mouth.

I understand responsible nutrition and, believe me, this is the one time of year (OK, I also let them have candy on Christmas—it appears that I'm the confectionary equivalent of a twice-yearly church-goer) when my kids—and I—indulge in the sweet stuff before breakfast even starts. I also understand that parents of diabetics need to calorie count and parents of kids with allergies need precise ingredient information, so I do get the importance.

I'm just saying that maybe we could have willful-ignorance packaging as well—an option that doesn't lay it all out. Perhaps we could have a choice between detailed and vague labeling? Because sometimes a woman just needs to enjoy her treats without knowing every single ugly, unpronounceable-ingredient-filled detail. Sometimes she just wants to share some sugar-based nostalgia with her kids without spending an hour in the grocery store dithering over whether providing this crap twice annually makes her an irredeemably terrible, near-negligent parent.

I mean, I bet that's what other people think. Those people who are annually wracked by the conflicting influences of "I want to" and "I ought to."

We have so much information available to us and, theoretically, we should be making spectacular choices all the time. We know how much screen exposure we should allow. We know how many servings of dark, leafy greens we should consume daily. We know that wearing sunscreen, avoiding processed foods, and meditating will make us healthier, happier, and able to enjoy incredibly long, wrinkle-free lives.

Except—maybe not entirely. When we fixate on what we should be doing, we can become wrapped up in where we're falling down on the job. We focus on the five servings of fruits and vegetables we *should* eat, rather than the three we *did* eat. We beat ourselves up over the Diet Coke we drank instead of our usual afternoon water from a stainless steel, toxin-free container. We begrudge ourselves the candy.

Really, it comes down to occasionally allowing ourselves the pleasure of indulgence and recognizing that indulgence doesn't have to mean a fancy molten lava cake. There's a time and place for artisanal this and single-grower that. But sometimes indulgence is giving yourself permission to enjoy something so lacking in nutritional merit, it barely qualifies as a food source. Because once—or twice—a year, we can ignore the ingredients and the calories and say, "You know what? I just like this." And if you treat every bite like the Proustian miracle that it is? You can just relax and enjoy.

THENEWSLETTER

All the doable stuff you need to live better (recipes! workouts! sleep tips!).

READ THIS NEXT: Whoa, There's *This* Much Sugar in a Few Squirts of Your Fave Condiments?

Pin It Share

Easter Sugar Eat