



100% Natural Food Products are All Healthy?

In general, “100% natural food” refers to food products with no additives, artificial colourings or preservatives. Their pricing is somewhat higher than conventional foods. Nevertheless, these claims on natural food products are not strictly regulated. According to the Centre for Food Safety, as long as the “100% natural food” description does not mention any specific nutrients, such descriptions do not constitute “nutrition claims”.ⁱ Thus, these claims are vague and do not have real meanings at all.

Even though natural food products are free of additives and have minimal processing, it does not necessarily mean they are healthy:

100% pure coconut oil



“100% pure coconut oil” has gained much attention in recent years due to its claims of preventing and curing diseases, improving digestion and absorption of nutrients, and promoting individuals’ well-being. However, these claims are not supported by clinical evidence. On the contrary, coconut oil’s saturated fat constitutes 87% of the total fat content in the oil. The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests us to limit the intake of coconut oil to avoid excessive intake of saturated fat, which may lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases.ⁱⁱ

Nutritional content of coconut oil (per 100g)ⁱⁱⁱ

Energy	862 kcal
Total Fats	100 g
* Saturated fat	87 g
* Monounsaturated fat	5.8 g
* Polyunsaturated fat	1.8 g

✚ 100% all-natural dried fruit



Dried fruits such as raisins, dried cranberries, and dried apricots are rich in dietary fibre. However, the dehydration process concentrates the fructose naturally found in fruits, thus turning dried fruits into high-sugar foods. For instance, 100g of raisins are composed of more than 50% of sugar. Therefore, over-consumption may lead to excessive intake of sugar and energy, thereby leading to weight gain. Hence, we need to pay attention to the portion size and avoid over-eating. Just because fruits are healthy in general does not mean we could consume it mindlessly. One serving of fruit is equivalent to 1 tablespoon of raisins or 3 dried apricots.

Nutritional content of raisins (per 100 g) ⁱⁱⁱ

Energy	299 kcal
Sugars	60 g
Dietary fibre	3.7 g
Water	15.4 g

In short, while “100% natural food” products are more expensive in general, they are not necessarily a healthier choice. Be a smart buyer by reading the food labels carefully to understand the nutritional value of the products, and then make a healthy choice.

To know more about ...

- ✧ healthy eating, please visit ‘Health Zone’ website at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ ‘Health@work.hk Project’, please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>

ⁱ Centre for Food Safety

ⁱⁱ World Health Organization. *Avoiding Heart Attacks and Strokes. Don't Be a Victim- Protect Yourself*. Geneva, 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Nutrient Data Laboratory, US Department of Agriculture