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FOOD SHOPPING AND CONTRABAND

By J. Morris Hicks

I learned the word “contraband” while serving in the United States Coast Guard. It means “goods imported illegally.” So, if you still have cheese in your refrigerator and beef in your freezer, you can now refer to those items as contraband--when it comes to 4Leaf eating.

Technically, you could score at the 4Leaf level and still eat a little contraband every now and then, but I’m going to try to help you learn to live happily ever after without those foods which do not contribute to your vibrant health.

Here’s the deal with contraband and shopping for food: “If it goes into your shopping cart, it will end up in your stomach.” First, we get the contraband out of the kitchen and next we work on not bringing anymore home.

Cleaning out your kitchen. As with your shopping cart, if you still have contraband in your kitchen, there’s a good chance that it will end up in your stomach. So what do you do with it? Throw it all away?

No, but don't put it in your basement either. That would be a signal to your brain that this is a temporary way of eating. Not good to play tricks on your brain; rather, you want to do everything you can to maximize your chances for success by getting your subconscious brain acclimated to the 4Leaf mentality.

So what do you do with all that cheese, milk, yogurt, ice cream, canned meats, frozen meals with meat and dairy, frozen burgers, chicken, etc.? I recommend that you package them all up and give them away to charity, a neighbor, a friend or a family member.

My son Jason disagreed, saying that it would be unethical to give away food that you might now consider to be a form of poison. But, for me, I hate to see waste of any kind, and throwing away food that the majority of people think of as wholesome, is a huge waste.

Think of it this way. Whether you donate your meat and dairy products or not, the recipients will likely continue to eat them for a very long time. Or at least until they see your *before and after* pictures. By donating that food, you're just making sure that fewer animals have to suffer and die, in order to replace the edible food that you trashed.

Shopping for Groceries. The first thing you need to do is make a list of all the items that you will need to prepare the routine meals that you plan to eat at home. You should always have a list.

Another tip is to get most of your food from the fresh produce section and the section that has dried grains and legumes. While in those areas, you will not find a "Nutrition Facts" panel on most of the products. It's not needed for fresh whole plants, but is required for all packaged foods.

4LEAF GUIDE TO VIBRANT HEALTH

When buying processed food in a package, find the Nutrition Facts panel, which is usually on the back or the side of the package. Let's look at five things on this panel: Calories from Fat, Cholesterol, Sodium, Fiber and Sugars. Everything else is pretty much worthless.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

1. Calories from Fat. To compute the percentage fat, divide “Calories from fat” by total “Calories” per serving. Use your smartphone calculator if you must, but you can usually eyeball it and tell if the product is more than 20% fat. You can easily see that this product is over 40% fat ($110/250 = 44\%$ to be precise). Don't buy it.

2. Cholesterol. If it has some in it, that means it contains animal products. This one has 30 mg/serving. Don't buy this product.

3. Sodium. Rule of thumb, if the mg of sodium is less than the “Calories” per serving above, it’s okay. This one is 470 mg per 250 calories/serving. Another reason not to buy it.

4. Dietary fiber. An essential nutrient, it plays a very important role in making your body work properly. We suggest that you look for products with lots of fiber. Another clue that this product contains animal-based foods is that it has zero fiber, which is contained ONLY in plant foods.

5. Sugars. We suggest you keep this to a minimum. It’s almost impossible to buy packaged products like non-dairy milks or boxed cereal without lots of added sugar in them. This product has 5 grams of added sugar per serving. This is a product that you should not buy.

Ingredients List (for another product). In addition to the Nutrition Facts panel, this list will be somewhere on the package. Try to avoid packaged goods that have more than three or four ingredients. The list is ranked by weight of the ingredient. Here’s one for a so-called “vegan cheese.”

INGREDIENTS: Soy Base (Filtered Water, Isolated Soy Protein), Casein* (A Dried Skim Milk Protein) Canola Oil, Modified Food Starch, Salt, Contains 2% or less of Rice Flour, Natural Flavors, Tapioca Starch, Sodium Polyphosphate, Powdered Cellulose, Tricalcium Phosphate, Sodium Phosphate, Mono and Diglycerides, Sorbic Acid (Preservative), Carrageenan, Sodium Citrate, Citric Acid, Lactic Acid, Vitamin A Palmitate, Vitamin C, Ferric Orthophosphate, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D3, Folic Acid, Vitamin B6, Riboflavin (Vitamin B2), Vitamin E, Potato Starch and Powdered Cellulose added to Prevent Caking. *Adds a trivial amount of Lactose.

This product actually has some animal products AND has far more than three ingredients—reinforcing the advice that “vegan meats and cheeses” should be minimized.