



# WHO DETERMINES WHICH FOODS ARE HEALTHY?

If news that the FDA recently asked KIND to stop referring to their bars as “healthy” has you confused, you are not alone. With ingredients like nuts and fruit that nutrition experts consistently encourage, it may seem odd that they wouldn’t be healthy. So, what is the FDA saying?



## Why is the FDA involved?

The FDA, or Food and Drug Administration, is responsible for protecting the public health by assuring that foods (except for meat from livestock, poultry and some egg products which are regulated by the USDA) are safe, wholesome, sanitary and properly labeled. Under its role to ensure that foods are properly labeled, FDA regulates the use of health claims on foods, including the term “healthy.”



## What does “healthy” mean to the FDA?

Most nutrition experts will tell you that being healthy is about eating a variety of good foods. Defining one food as healthy or not within the context of an overall diet can be complicated. To make sure that the term is applied to foods consistently, the FDA has a very specific definition of “healthy” that includes limits on total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium as well as a requirement that a certain amount of beneficial nutrients like vitamins, minerals or fiber be present. If a food does not meet these requirements, it is not legally allowed to be called “healthy.”



## Bottom Line

In the case of KIND, the FDA determined that some of their bars did not meet the requirements for use of the term “healthy.” They also found additional misbranding issues as they relate to nutrient content and other health claims. KIND has stated that they will correct their labeling issues and stands behind the quality and safety of their products. Does any of this mean that KIND bars, or other foods that don’t meet the FDA definition of “healthy” cannot be part of a healthful diet? Absolutely not. Consistency in labeling is important, but so is eating a variety of nutrient rich foods, including fruit and nuts.

#### REFERENCES:

1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. <http://www.fda.gov>.
2. FDA Warning letter to KIND, LLC 3/17/15. <http://www.fda.gov/CECI/EnforcementActions/WarningLetters/ucm440942.htm>
3. KIND Blog: A note to our community. <https://www.kindsnacks.com/blog/post/a-note-to-our-kind-community-2/>

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