Superfoods and Trends: Fact or Fiction?

*FitWell 2016*
What does the term ‘superfood’ mean?

- Marketing terms used for foods to make a claim that they contain more nutrients and health benefits than other foods

- Examples: chia seeds, hemp seeds, coconut oil, goji berries, kale, blueberries, avocado, and more

- Are they really super???
CLAIMS

- The medium chain triglycerides are healthy and differentiate it from other saturated fats
- Lauric acid makes it healthy for your heart
- Boosts immune system
- Helps w/ numerous diseases including Alzheimer’s

REALITY

- Coconut oil is a saturated fat and is no healthier than saturated fats found in lard and other animal fats
- Contains more saturated fat than butter
- Raises cholesterol levels- both LDL (bad) and HDL (good)
- Great moisturizer and shaving cream but not so great to eat
ACAÍ BERRY

- CLAIMS
  - Rich in antioxidants
  - Promotes weight loss
  - Helps w/ various health conditions

- REALITY
  - Not been shown to have more health benefits than other fruits but found to have more antioxidants than other berries
  - Limited research
  - Tastes good in smoothie bowls
CHIA SEEDS

**CLAIMS**

- High in omega-3 fatty acids
- Helps regulate blood glucose levels
- Aids in weight loss
- Rich in minerals - calcium, potassium, magnesium
- Good source of protein

**REALITY**

- High in minerals. Requires a lot of chia seeds to get protein
- Does not alter appetite or assist in weight loss
- Good egg replacer in vegan baking when soaked in water
HEMP SEEDS

CLAIMS
- Good complete plant protein (contains all essential amino acids)
- Rich in omega-3 fatty acids
- May reduce risk of heart disease

REALITY
- Good complete plant protein (contains all essential amino acids)
- High in fiber
- Some research suggests it may be beneficial to heart health but more research is needed
CACAO

- **CLAIMS**
  - High in antioxidants
  - May protect against cancer

- **REALITY**
  - Some research suggests cardiac benefits but limited evidence is available

- Sugar-free
JUICING

CLAIMS

- Flushes toxins from the body
- Increases energy

REALITY

- Juice cleanses are dangerous and throw body into starvation mode
- Drinking fresh-pressed juice will increase vitamin consumption
- Smoothies retain fiber and more nutrient content relative to juice