Healthy Living: Clues of Quackery

Linda B. Bobroff and Luisa Oliver-Cordero

Is there something for sale?
Information provided as part of a sales pitch often is NOT trustworthy!

Is the author/speaker qualified to provide nutrition or health information?
Information from persons who lack formal education in nutrition or health may not be trustworthy. Registered dietitians (RD or RDN) licensed dietitians/nutritionists (LD/N), and nutrition professors (PhD) all have training in nutrition. Health professionals such as physicians (MD), physician’s assistants (PA), nurses (RN), nurse practitioners (ARNP), and pharmacists (PharmD) are good sources of health information.

Is elimination of one or more food groups recommended?
If so, this may be a sign of quackery. For good health, we need a variety of nutrients from all the food groups. Persons from different cultures as well as vegetarians can use MyPlate to learn how to get all the nutrients they need. Information is available at ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Does it sound too good to be true?
Key words that may mean quackery are “quick,” “painless,” “miracle,” and “cure.”

Figure 1. Look for the clues of quackery. 
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