

Inside Out: The Scoop on Kellogg's FiberPlus Antioxidant Bars

They lend new meaning to consumer confidence. How did I discover these treats? Most inadvertently.

I was backed up with work.

I'd just completed a diet and needed a distraction from fasting and work anxiety, so I convinced my conscience that some chocolaty-trail mix might help me grind through the long hours.

Good intentions paved the road to Sam's Club, and my hunt took me down an aisle-full of too many granola bar options. I noticed one inviting econo-family-sized box featuring a chocolate and caramel cluster on a dark brown background, labeled 'Antioxidant Bars'. That was just the license I needed to subvert any attention to or conscious acknowledgment of the preceding words, 'FiberPlus'.

How manipulative these companies are, adorning their packaging with faux health tags to authorize consumers like me to commit to their cravings. Free-range gummy worms? Yum.

On my way home, I heaved the suitcase of snack bars to the front seat and began sampling. My choices from the four smaller boxes contained within included dark chocolate almond and chocolate chip. I know better than to mess around with snack bars, so my expectations were low and somewhat mitigated by my flimsy rationalization of choosing a "healthy" alternative.

To my surprise, this was not the average chewy granola bar, but a brilliant confection designed to permit furious consumption. The startlingly light composition was like eating a high-end composite tennis racket covered in chocolate and caramel; a seemingly impossible marriage of flavor and texture.

Such a rich, decadent combination should only allow for just a few bites, but this configuration seduced much in the same way that a paper-mâché boulder might delight a child to swagger around like a giant threatening to destroy an imaginary city. My snack attack had found a sixth gear and I was raring to redline.

Within a few hours of the first day, I had consumed two of the four boxes. The next day I continued at the same velocity, marveling at my seismology and noticing how my nose was running, worrying for a moment that it might be blood.

I'm sure my roommate at that time would confer I showed no consideration or modesty as I attended to my new fascination with complete disregard, though it crossed my mind that my nervous neighbor might call the police.

When only one bar remained, my inner goldfish begrudgingly acknowledged my threshold for yielding to caution, and I'd grown curious enough to check the packaging for clues, suspecting I'd find a warning label. That's when 'FiberPlus' finally registered.

I read the ingredients: Chicory root fiber, rolled oats, crisp rice...35% of your daily fiber per bar. Each box contained five bars, and I'd eaten two boxes daily.

Then I found a small, yellow rectangle: "NEW USERS: Increase your fiber intake gradually. Gastrointestinal discomfort may occur until your body adjusts."

New users? One doesn't think to administer a snack, though that is the correct way to think about food, isn't it? People should eat a snack to extend energy or move their metabolism, but that box should have come with a trainer. Or a spotter.

Since I hadn't eaten a proper meal either day, I wised up and fixed something more substantial later that evening.

Amy's Burritos come in several healthy varieties including black bean and rice, non-dairy, Indian spinach and tofu, and Southwestern.

Three or four usually do the trick.