

REALFOOD
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MEALS FOR TUBE-FED PEOPLE

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Featured Product Testimonial
from the Blog of the Traveling Tubie,
by Brian Liebenow



FROM THE BLOG OF THE TRAVELING TUBIE

Product Endorsement

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I am so jealous of Julie Bombacino. "Who is Julie Bombacino," you ask? She is a mother who started a company in 2012 that makes real food blends for tubies (RealFoodBlends.com). Why am I jealous? Because I wish I had that idea myself. Instead, I'm sitting on my ass writing about the HUGE difference her company will make on those of us who tubefeed. Not to mention the dramatic effect she'll have on companies that manufacture formula and tout their product as "nutritious."

Let me share my experience eating Julie's meals, as opposed to pushing an 8 ounce can of TwoCal HN through my tube...



475 calories
of fun!

First of all, what are the ingredients in a typical formula like TwoCal HN? They don't have it on their cans, but I did find it on their website:

Water, Corn Syrup Solids, Sodium & Calcium Caseinates, Corn Maltodextrin, High Oleic Safflower Oil, Sugar (Sucrose), Medium-Chain Triglycerides, Canola Oil, Fructooligosaccharides, Potassium Citrate, Magnesium Chloride, Calcium Phosphate, Natural & Artificial Flavors, Soy Lecithin, Sodium Citrate, Ascorbic Acid, Choline Chloride, Taurine, L-Carnitine, Zinc Sulfate, Ferrous Sulfate, dl-Alpha-Tocopheryl Acetate, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Manganese Sulfate, Cupric Sulfate, Thiamine Chloride Hydrochloride, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Riboflavin, Vitamin A Palmitate, Folic Acid, Biotin, Chromium Chloride, Sodium Molybdate, Potassium Iodide, Sodium Selenate, Phylloquinone, Cyanocobalamin, and Vitamin D3.

No meal is complete without a helping of dl-Alpha-Tocopheryl Acetate, right? Also, what the hell are Fructooligosaccharides? They sound delicious, whatever they are. I actually had to look them up. There's a wikipedia page devoted to Fructooligosaccharides, believe it or not. They serve as an alternate artificial sweetener and are touted for their prebiotic (not probiotic) health benefits. You learn something new every day. So TwoCal has Fructooligosaccharides going for it, if nothing else.



I prefer
vanilla;
Betsy
likes her
chocolate.
Either way,
it's crap.

How about Ensure Plus? They also supply ingredients on their website:

Water, Corn Maltodextrin, Sugar, Milk Protein Concentrate, Canola Oil, Soy Protein Isolate, Corn Oil, Pea Protein Concentrate. Less than 0.5% of the Following: Natural & Artificial Flavor, Magnesium Phosphate, Potassium Citrate, Soy Lecithin, Sodium Citrate, Potassium Chloride, Calcium Phosphate, Calcium Carbonate, Salt, Choline Chloride, Ascorbic Acid, Potassium Hydroxide, Carrageenan, Ferrous Sulfate, dl-Alpha-Tocopheryl Acetate, Zinc Sulfate, Niacinamide, Manganese Sulfate, Calcium Pantothenate, Cupric Sulfate, Vitamin A Palmitate, Thiamine Chloride Hydrochloride, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Riboflavin, Chromium Chloride, Folic Acid, Sodium Molybdate, Biotin, Sodium Selenate, Potassium Iodide, Phylloquinone, Vitamin D3, and Cyanocobalamin.

No Fructooligosaccharides but I see dl-Alpha-Tocopheryl Acetate again. There are a lot of similarities. Sugar is high on both lists. At least Ensure has pea protein concentrate; that's a recognizable vegetable, right? Also, both products seem to contain a lot of corn.

Stay Strong, Stay Active with BOOST.®

Boost Plus? I can't tolerate their formula at all, but here's an image of their ingredients:

Once again, sugar and corn are prominently featured and there're those Fructooligosaccharides again. I get a formula called Jevity whenever I'm staying at the hospital. It's supposed to be strictly for tube-feeding. Jevity is made by the same company that makes TwoCal.

Nutrition Facts		Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Serving Size 1 bottle (237mL)		Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Servings per container 6			
Amount Per Serving		Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Calories 360	Calories from Fat 130	Sat Fat	Less than 20g 25g
		Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
	% Daily Value*	Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Fat 14g	22%	Potassium	3,500mg 3,500mg
Saturated Fat 2g	10%	Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Trans Fat 0g		Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
		Protein	65g 65g
Cholesterol 10mg	3%	*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Sodium 200mg	8%	Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Potassium 460mg	13%		
Total Carbohydrate 45g	15%		
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%		
Sugars 24g			
Protein 14g	28%		
Vitamin A (50% as beta-carotene)	25%		
Vitamin C 100%	• Calcium 35%		
Iron 25%	• Vitamin D 60%		
Vitamin E 100%	• Vitamin K 40%		
Thiamin 25%	• Riboflavin 25%		
Niacin 20%	• Vitamin B6 35%		
Folic Acid 25%	• Vitamin B12 35%		
Biotin 25%	• Pantothenic Acid 25%		
Phosphorus 30%	• Iodine 25%		
Magnesium 25%	• Zinc 30%		
Selenium 25%	• Copper 25%		
Manganese 35%	• Chromium 25%		
Molybdenum 25%	• Chloride 8%		

Don't know if I get the 1.0, 1.2, or 1.5 Cal but this is what it looks like



Here are the ingredients for their formula:

Water, Corn Maltodextrin, Corn Syrup Solids, Sodium & Calcium Caseinates, Soy Protein Isolate, Canola Oil, Corn Oil, Fructooligosaccharides, Medium-Chain Triglycerides, Soy Fiber, Oat Fiber, Calcium Phosphate, Magnesium Phosphate, Potassium Citrate, Gum Arabic, Soy Lecithin, Potassium Chloride, Carboxymethylcellulose, Sodium Chloride, Ascorbic Acid, Choline Chloride, Sodium Citrate, L-Carnitine, Taurine, Zinc Sulfate, dl-Alpha-Tocopheryl Acetate, Ferrous Sulfate, Niacinamide, Calcium Pantothenate, Manganese Sulfate, Cupric Sulfate, Thiamine Chloride Hydrochloride, Pyridoxine Hydrochloride, Riboflavin, Beta-Carotene, Vitamin A Palmitate, Folic Acid, Biotin, Chromium Chloride, Sodium Molybdate, Potassium Iodide, Sodium Selenate, Phylloquinone, Cyanocobalamin, and Vitamin D3.

Corn and Fructooligosaccharides. Plus some Carboxymethylcellulose. That's a new one. Why did formula companies have to fill their products with all these complex ingredients, rather than just use actual food?? Before Ensure and TwoCal and all the rest came along, people used to get blended meals through their tubes. We need to get back to our "tubie roots" because it's much healthier. Everyone in the "Blenderized Diet" community can attest to the dramatic difference eating real food has on our health.

So, let's walk through the way I feel putting formula through my tube. In the morning, I often have a can of TwoCal because it's more convenient than preparing a meal, I'm lazy, and one can doesn't make me nauseous the way 5 cans a day would.

So here's my open can this morning:



And here's how I feel when I eat it:



"bllllleeeeeaaaaahhhh"

Note the look of revulsion.

TwoCal, or any formula, feels really heavy in my stomach. Like I've just ingested a brick. I don't feel satisfied at all. If I have to subsist on TwoCal all day, eating nothing else, I have a hard time getting down the amount I need. Before I started eating blended foods, my nutritionist had me take at least 6 cans of Ensure Plus ("preferably 7," he said) every day. Typically I couldn't do more than 4 or 5. Desperate to get calories, I got a pump through the VA so I could slowly pump in formula overnight. I couldn't stand being tethered to a pump, but it was the only way I could stomach any of the formulas I tried.

"Then I found blended food. Sort of sounds like a religion, I know. But my life has gone from a downward spiral to actually enjoying eating again."

Anyway, let's take a look at Mrs. Bombacino's ingredients for the "Salmon Oats & Squash" blend. It's right on every box:



Pretty much just what it says.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Pouch (267g) Serving Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	Calories from Fat 170
Calories 330	
	% Daily Values*
Total Fat 20g	31%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 30mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 28g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 9g	
Protein 13g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 4%	Iron 10%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2400mg	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Ingredients: Pomegranate Juice, Water, Squash Puree, Salmon, Rolled Oats, Flaxseed Oil.
Contains: Fish (salmon)

Ready to use for bolus feeding. Refrigerate after opening and use within 24 hours.

RealFoodBlends.com
Do not use for parenteral (intravenous) feeding. Particulate matter may occasionally be present. Strain if this is a concern for enteral feeding. Always discuss any dietary changes with your medical professional(s).

0 82045 49747 2

Manufactured for:
Real Food Blends
PO BOX 2126
Chesterton IN 46304

Good until three years so I can start stocking up for the zombie apocalypse!!

Here are the Ingredients for Real Food Blends Salmon, Oats & Squash Meal:

Pomegranate Juice, Water, Squash Puree, Salmon, Rolled Oats (Gluten Free), Flaxseed Oil.

That's it. I recognize every one of those ingredients. The other night I had the pleasure of eating a "Salmon Oats & Squash" blend. First, here's a picture of Grace doing the happy dance when I got a package of blended meals:



I told her the box was full of chocolate. Am I a bad father?

Once you open a box of the salmon blend it looks like this. Sort of like an M.R.E. pouch. So maybe tubies could be in the military! Or all our soldiers should have feeding tubes!!! Just something to think about.



MRE flashbacks...

The pouches are designed to stand on their own. This is so that you can draw up a syringe-full right out of the pouch and plunge it in the tube.



It actually smelled really good!



I know it's hard to tell, but that's my happy face.

Personally, it's easier for me to pour it into my tube directly, rather than pulling it up into the syringe with the plunger first (see my Mechanics of Tubefeeding post) so I dumped it out into a measuring cup to make it easier to pour. Here I am eating a Real Food Blend:

“Seriously, EVERY TUBIE NEEDS TO GO OUT AND BUY THESE BLENDS!!!!”

It was just like eating a regular blended meal. Easy on my stomach. I felt completely satisfied, even with such a small amount. This is more of a child-size portion, just 8 ounces. I could easily have eaten two of these in one sitting. No nausea. Could I ingest 2 cans of Ensure, one after the other like that? Not a chance.

These meals will be so vital to me when I'm traveling! They're easy to pack. They're shelf-stable, without needing refrigeration. I like the gluten-free "Salmon Oats & Squash" blend, but they also have a gluten-free quinoa blend and a chicken blend. Mrs. Bombacino says that they are working on more adult-size portions. Seriously, EVERY TUBIE NEEDS TO GO OUT AND BUY THESE BLENDS!!!!

No, I'm not just urging other tubies and tubie moms to buy Real Food Blends. EVERYONE needs to buy these meals, and I'll tell you why. I'm tired of visiting someone else's house and being asked, "Can I get you anything to eat?" Then I have to put that wry expression on my face and say, "Sorry, no, I eat through a feeding tube." More often I'm too tired to go into detail about my health issues, so I say, "No thanks, I'm not hungry." This leaves my host thinking I'm impolite, too good for their food, angry words are exchanged, I'm never invited back, yada yada yada, we exchange death threats. It's a whole big thing.



For all those times, you need to buy at least a decent selection of Real Food Blends. To make people like me feel at home. "Would you like something to eat, Brian? What's that you say? You eat through a tube? Well actually, I have a selection of delicious blended meals I can offer you." This would make me feel so welcome. So included.

You know what? If you don't get a salmon meal, then I'm not coming to visit you. Ever. How about that? I know the vast majority of you are thinking, Fantastic!! I don't want that guy on my street, much less in my house!!! However, for those of you who enjoy my company. If you beg me constantly to come by, just for an hour, at least. If you wait by your front door every day hoping for a glimpse of me, then this message is for you!! Yeah, I'M TALKING TO YOU, MOM!!! ...no? uh...ok...THEN I'M TALKING TO YOU, GRAMMY!!! She can't say no because she doesn't use the internet, so HA!!!!!!

So, if you'd like to be a good host, then please buy a nice selection of Mrs. Bombacino's meals. Like I said, she should be coming out with adult-size portions soon. Here's the link again: RealFoodBlends.com or they're on Amazon!

- Brian Liebenow, The Traveling Tubie



RealFoodBlends.com

