How buyers can be duped by food labels

Marketing buzzwords may lead consumers to over-infer nutritional value of an item

"Research has shown that how food items are framed and packaged can strongly influence consumers' perception of and preference for those items," said Associate Professor Leonard Lee, from the National University of Singapore's NUS Business School.

"People are often misled by how the food is packaged and how it looks because some packaging is designed to give consumers a false perception of the nutritional value of the food," he said.

"A recent study shows that when the packaging is suggestive of a healthy food, even when the product is not healthy, people are more likely to believe that it is healthy," he added.

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"The packaging can be designed to look healthy even when the product is not healthy," said Professor Lee.

"For example, a package that looks like a juice box might be filled with a snack food that is not healthy," he said.

"This is because people often rely on visual cues to make decisions about what they eat," he added.

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