

foodfacts

FACT-CHECK
GUIDEBOOK

2026

FACTCHECK!!



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide brings together the key patterns, phrases, and "science-y" terms that show up again and again in **online nutrition content**. You can dip into it when something in your feed feels off, or read it through to see how these pieces fit into a bigger misinformation ecosystem.

Use the **Misinfo Mechanics** section when a post feels persuasive but you can't quite say why. It walks you through common fallacies and tactics that make weak arguments sound convincing, and shows how these patterns are especially well suited to social media algorithms that reward emotion, certainty, and simplicity over nuance.

Use the **Buzzword Breakdown** when you see a grabby term, "inflammation," "glucose spikes," "detox," "root causes," "hormonal imbalances", being used as a catch-all explanation. This section helps you separate genuine biological concepts from vague, overextended buzzwords that are used to sell a neat story or a product rather than reflect how complex bodies and diets actually are.

Use the **Diet Decoder** whenever you encounter a diet label, especially in polarised debates like "vegan vs carnivore." This section clarifies what different diet names actually involve, how flexible some of them are in practice, and why focusing on overall patterns matters more than belonging to an online "team."

Use the **Scientific Literacy Toolkit** when someone cites "a study" (or flashes a screenshot of one) to prove a sweeping claim. It explains core research terms and study designs so you can better judge what a single study can and cannot show, and how conclusions in nutrition are built from multiple studies over time rather than one eye-catching result. Knowing about these different parts of the scientific process can make you better equipped to handle conflicting nutrition information and to decide which claims deserve your attention, and which you can safely scroll past.





As you use this guide, try also asking: What is this post or influencer ultimately selling – in terms of lifestyle story (miracle fixes, total transformation, “new you”) and in terms of products, programmes, or paid partnerships? Those questions are often your **first reason to pause**, and they are the same starting point we use when we build influencer profiles to map recurring patterns in their narratives over time.

This guide isn’t exhaustive: it’s a starting snapshot of common patterns; for deeper dives, case studies, and extended explainers, you’ll find much more on **foodfacts.org**

Big Love from The foodfacts.org team



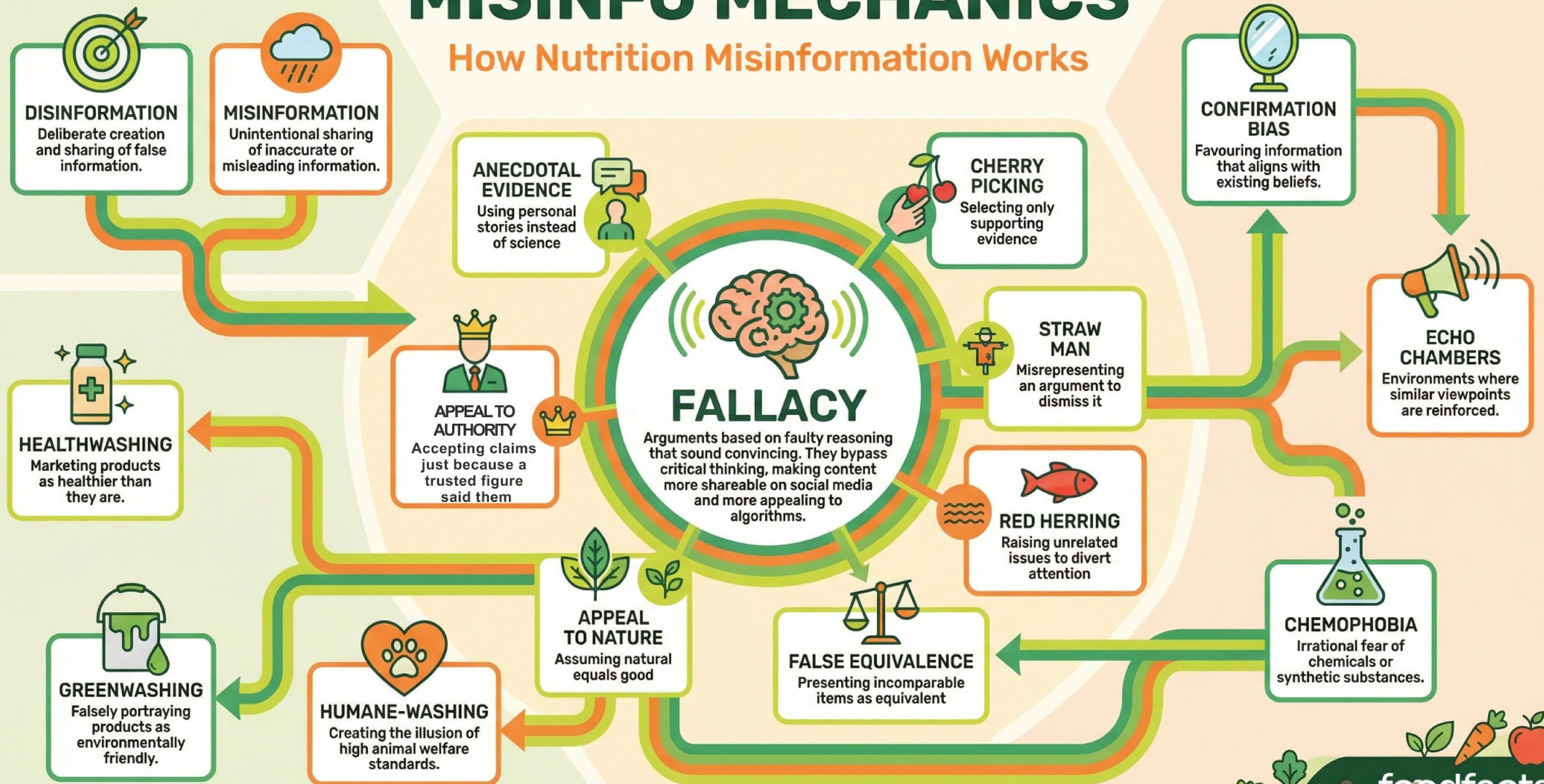
YOUR MAP TO NAVIGATING NUTRITION MISINFORMATION

Spot the patterns. Understand the tactics. Share with confidence.



MISINFO MECHANICS

How Nutrition Misinformation Works



BUZZWORD BREAKDOWN

Words That Sound Scientific But Can Be Overused

INFLAMMATION

The body's natural response to injury. Acute inflammation is helpful. Chronic inflammation is linked to disease. Online content often conflates the two.



GLUCOSE SPIKE

A normal temporary rise in blood sugar after eating. In healthy people, insulin returns levels to normal. The term 'spike' is emphasised to sound scarier than it is.



SUPERFOOD

A marketing term for nutrient-rich foods. No single food provides all needed nutrients. Benefits are often exaggerated online.



ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS (UPF)

Products undergoing multiple industrial processing steps. Not all UPFs are equally unhealthy. Context and overall diet matter more.



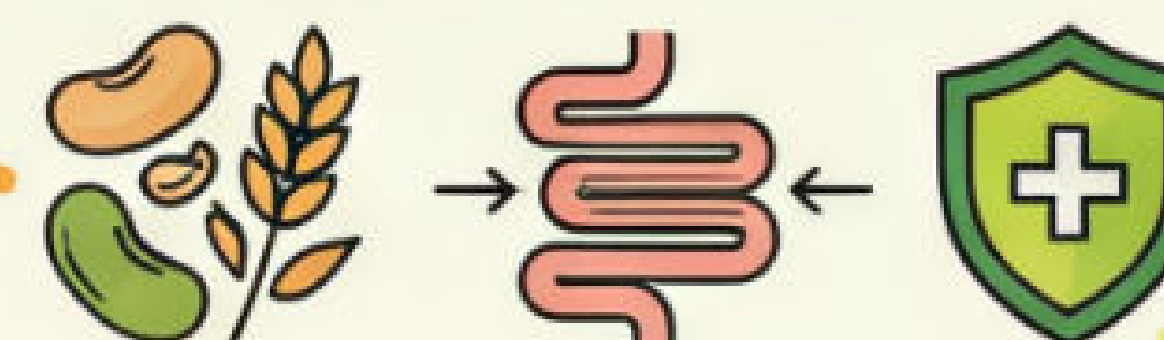
OXIDATION

A natural chemical process where molecules lose electrons. Excessive oxidation produces free radicals. A balanced diet with antioxidants helps manage this.



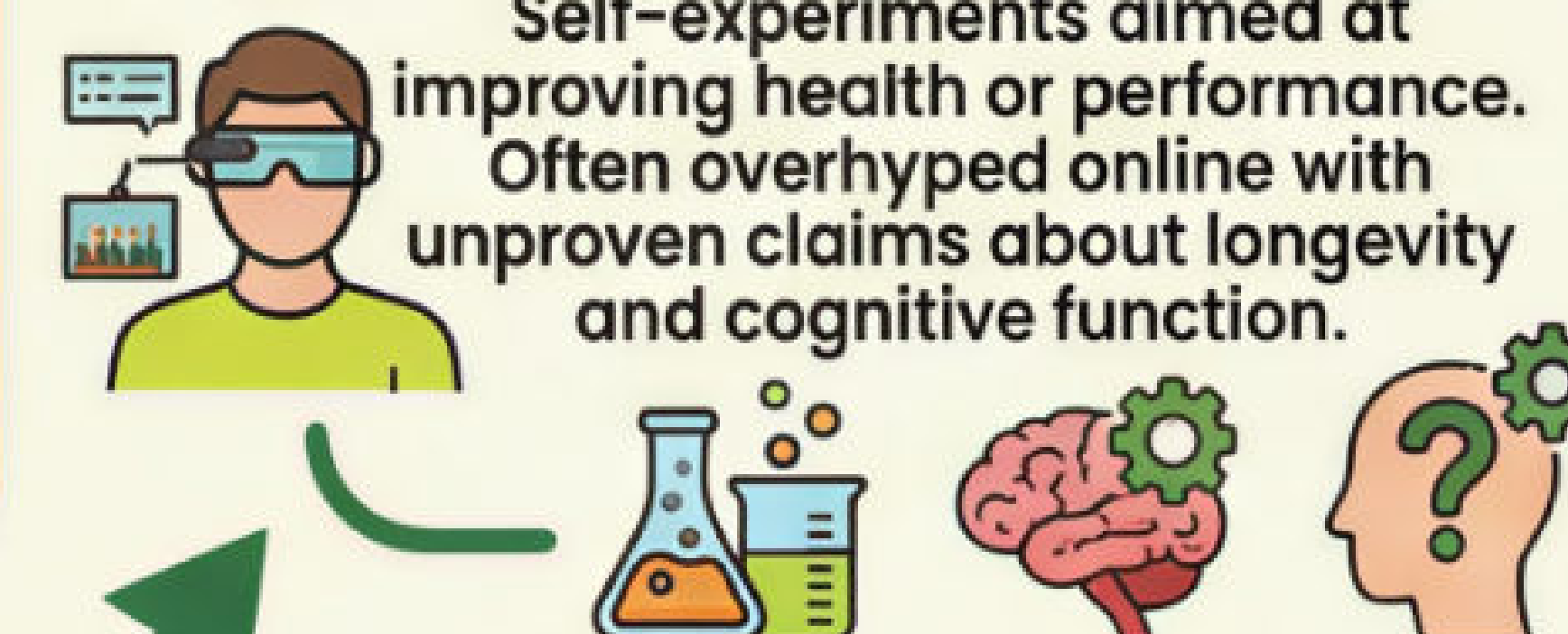
ANTI-NUTRIENTS

Naturally occurring compounds in plant foods that can reduce nutrient absorption. Rarely a concern in a balanced diet and can even have health benefits.



BIOHACKING

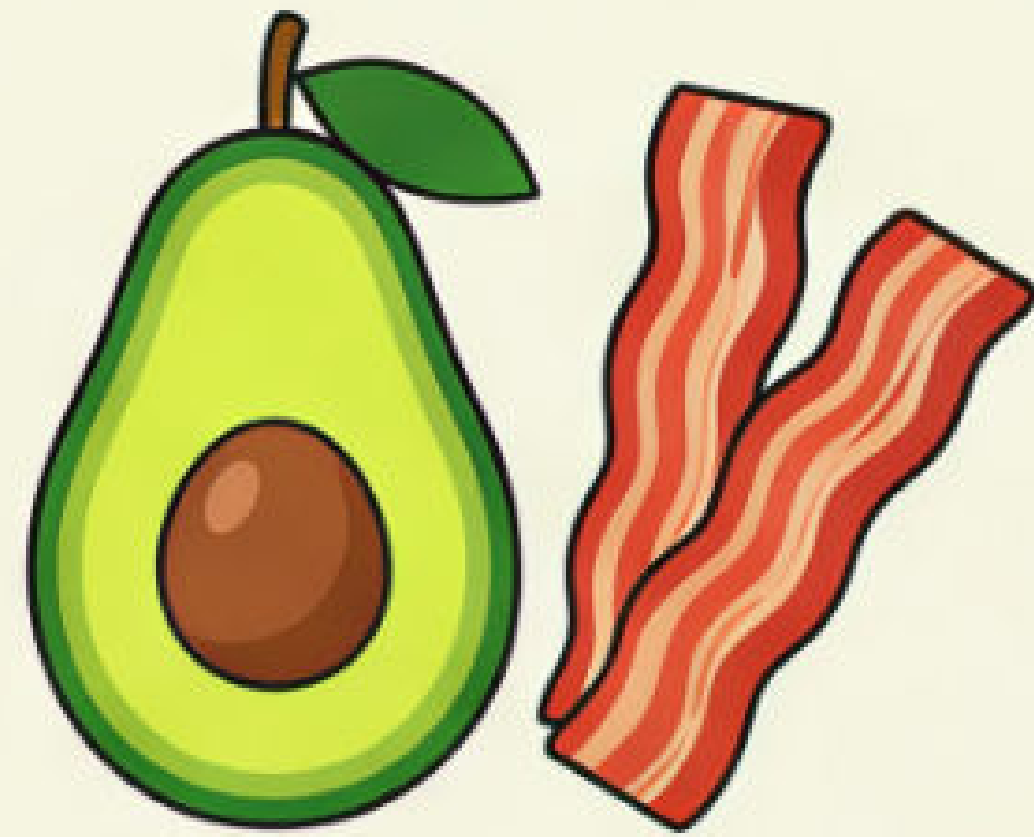
Self-experiments aimed at improving health or performance. Often overhyped online with unproven claims about longevity and cognitive function.



'DIET DECODER'

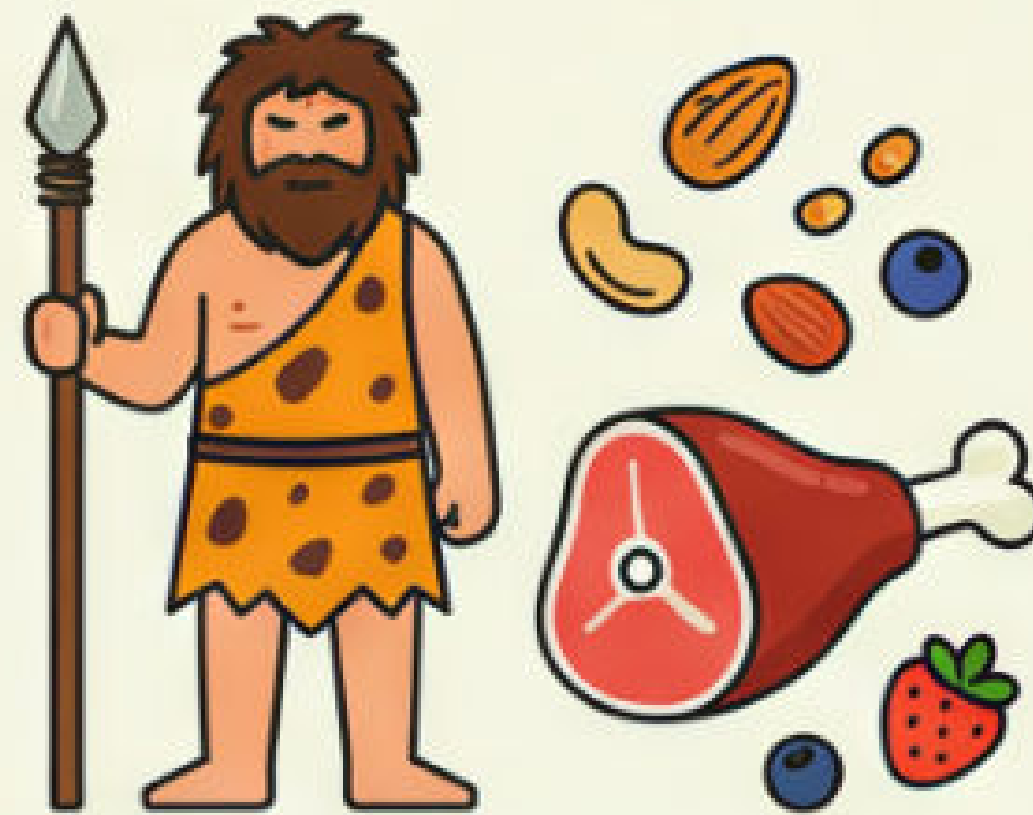
Understanding Popular Diets

1. KETO DIET



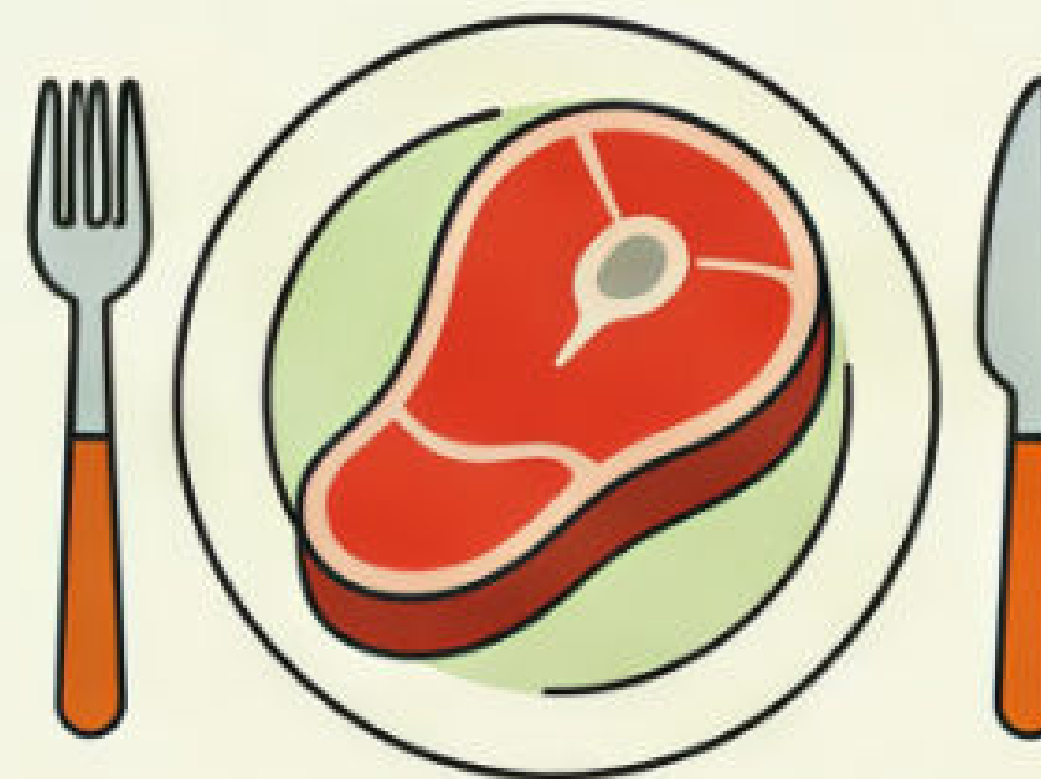
High-fat, low-carb. Shifts the body into ketosis to burn fat for energy. About 70-75% fat, 5-10% carbs.

2. PALEO DIET



Inspired by Stone Age eating. Emphasises whole foods. Excludes grains, legumes, dairy.

3. CARNIVORE DIET



Only animal products. Excludes all plant foods entirely. High protein and fat.

4. VEGAN DIET



Excludes all animal products. Based entirely on plant foods for ethical, environmental, or health reasons.

5. MEDITERRANEAN DIET



Traditional pattern emphasising whole foods, olive oil, fish. Focuses on overall eating patterns, not restriction.

6. PLANT-BASED DIET



Centres meals around plants. May include small amounts of animal products occasionally.

7. FLEXITARIAN DIET



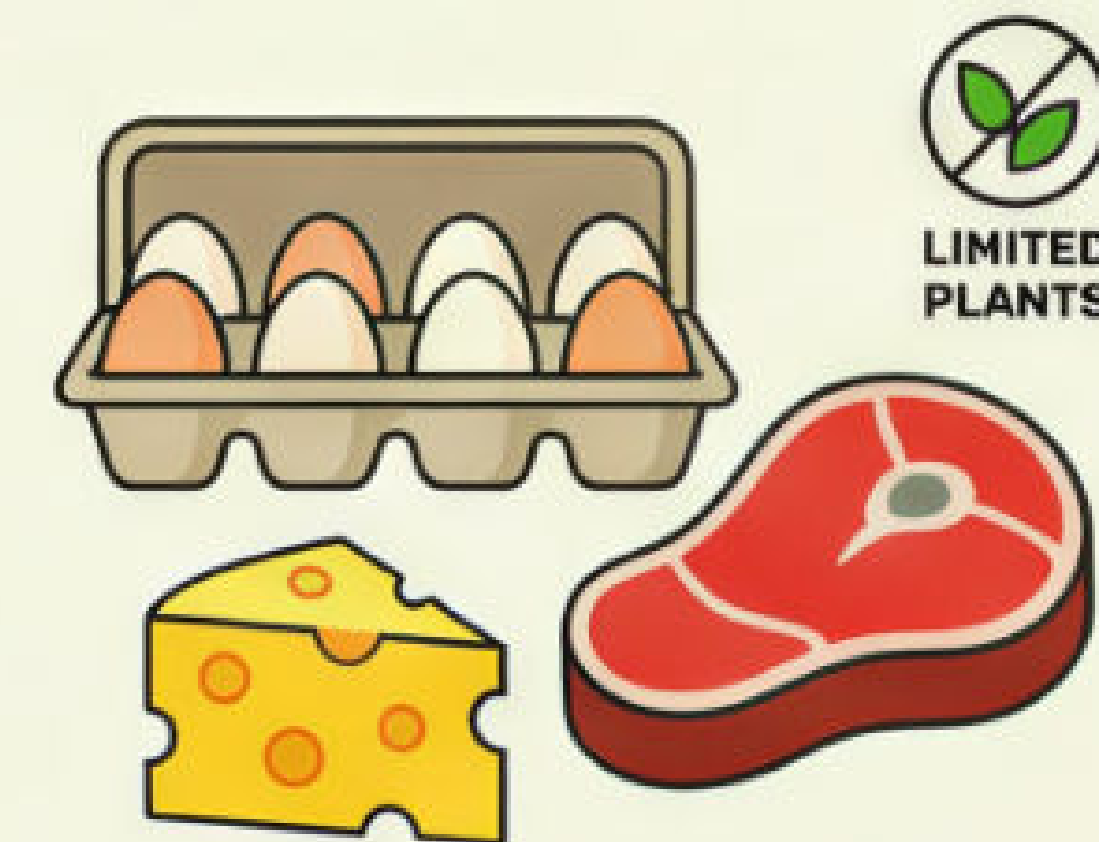
Mostly plant-based with occasional meat. Flexible and accessible approach.

8. RAW VEGAN DIET



Only raw, unprocessed plant foods heated below 48°C. Emphasises fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds.

9. ANIMAL-BASED DIET



Prioritises animal-derived foods with limited or no plant intake.

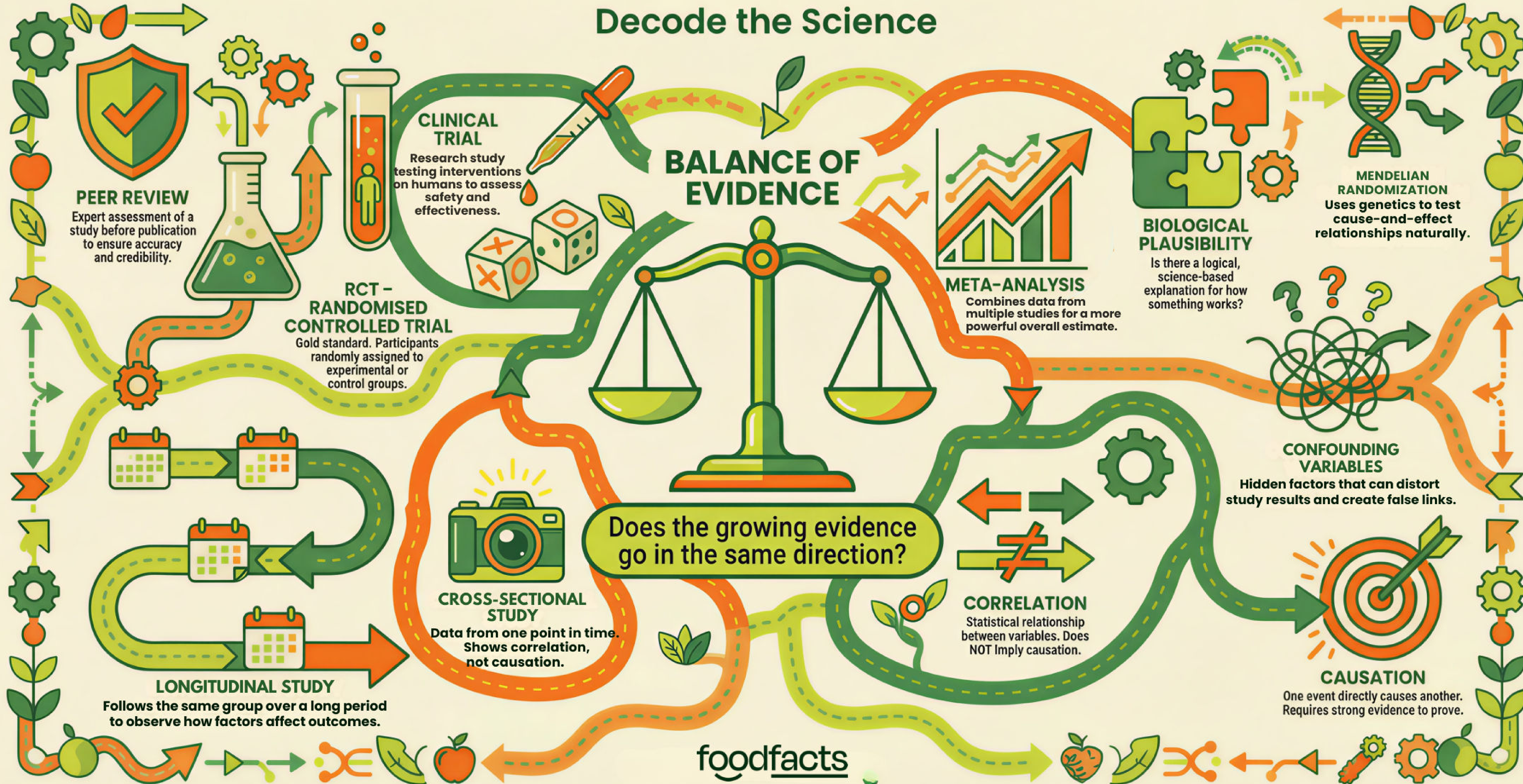
10. LOW-FODMAP DIET



Temporary structured diet for IBS. Reduces poorly absorbed carbohydrates.

RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY TOOLKIT

Decode the Science



Sometimes misinformation is spotted by how it makes you think about food, by losing sight of what truly matters

Chew garlic cloves every day

Drink apple cider vinegar every day

Drink herbal teas

Add turmeric to meals. How much?

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What Matters

Balanced dietary patterns are what truly make a difference



PAUSE. ASSESS. THEN SHARE.



‘When we understand how nutrition misinformation works — how it plays on our emotions, exploits our shortcuts, and mimics science — we gain the power to pause, assess, and choose what we share. Together, we can build an information ecosystem that prioritises evidence over hype, facts over fear, and knowledge over noise.’

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