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Better a Banana than a Bar

In today's fast-moving society, it's not just 'eat and run', it's 'eat while we run'. We have so many places to go and things to do that we have a hard time taking care of ourselves and our meals. Of course, the food industry is more than happy to keep us supplied with all kinds of quick and convenient versions of 'meals'. But, don't let the fancy wrappings fool you. Those meal replacement bars are a very poor substitute for a meal.

Why are they so poor, when they are fortified with vitamins, minerals, herbs and supplements? For one thing, no matter how much they are fortified, they still do not have everything you need in a meal. Fruits and vegetables are complex little packages, with hundreds of compounds, many of which we can't even name. Just a few years ago, who would have thought that the bright colors actually had a health value? But they do! There are no power bars, powdered shake mixes or meals in a can that come close to including all the ingredients that a kiwi fruit has.

Another reason why you're better off with a banana than a bar is that many of the bars are quite high in calories and often high in fat. At 200 to 300 calories to a bar, that's more than you need for a snack, but not enough to really be a meal. It won't keep you satisfied for long, so pretty soon you'll be nibbling on something else. You end up eating more calories than you would if you ate a sandwich, piece of fruit and glass of milk. Plus, a meal in a can does not give you any crunch and chew satisfaction, signals to your body that you have eaten enough. Sitting down to soup and salad satisfies the body as well as the heart, and is much more likely to keep that heart healthy too!