Healthy junk food? Here’s how nutrient-dense plant powders can take the guilt out of guilty pleasures

“The reality is that most families, especially now with the cost of food skyrocketing, can’t afford to eat fresh food and have to reach for processed food,” said Ayana Bio’s CEO, Frank Jaksch. “There’s an obvious solution: fix processed foods so they include actual nutritional value.”

The idea is this: If Ayana Bio can create a Brussels sprout powder, for example, containing all of the nutritional benefits of the child-averse vegetable, and then sell it to a snack food company for incorporation into its recipe, the guilt could be removed from guilty pleasures.

This concept is not entirely new. Companies have been creating plant powders for years (think matcha). But the difference is the ingredients Ayana Bio produces come from lab-grown plants rather than farmed plants.

So far, Ayana Bio has launched two products, made from lemon balm and echinacea. The lab plans to release three more by the end of the year, choosing plants that are known to have health and wellness benefits or that are difficult to reliably obtain through traditional agricultural methods.

“We go after plants where there’s a clear failure, whether that’s sustainability of supply or production cost,” Jaksch said.

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