GLP podcast: Debunking opioid myths; Decaf coffee boosts cancer risk? No. Local food might not be better for the planet

Most of what you know about the opioid epidemic is probably wrong. One expert shares the facts about pain pills and drug abuse you’ve likely never heard before. Will a chemical in decaf coffee give you cancer? Ignore the headlines and join us as we look at the science. Locally grown food may not be as good for the environment as we’ve been told, even if it’s got an “organic” label on it.

Podcast:

Join hosts Dr. Liza Dunn and GLP contributor Cameron English on episode 276 of Science Facts and Fallacies as they break down these latest news stories:

- Did fentanyl â??over-prescriptionâ?? drive the opioid epidemic? Hereâ??s why thatâ??s a false narrative

The story most people know about the opioid epidemic is that pharmaceutical companies mass produced prescription painkillers and hooked many unsuspecting patients on these addictive drugs. After they lost easy access to opioids because of heightened restrictions on painkiller prescribing, these newly minted addicts took to the street to acquire illicit heroin. The reality is much more complicated. Let’s take a look at some of the critically important details that are left out of the popular opioid epidemic story.

- Viewpoint: CNN joins list of media organizations snookered by Environmental Defense Fund claims that methylene chloride in decaffeinated coffee poses health hazards

There’s a new chemical scare loose in the headlines. This time it’s fueled by trace amounts of a solvent called methylene chloride, which is used to decaffeinate coffee. After most of the caffeine is removed from coffee, trace amounts of methylene chloride remain. The activist group Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) has pounced on this benign observation, using it to pressure the FDA to ban the chemical from coffee. Should we fear our exposure to tiny amounts of methylene chloride? Let’s examine the evidence.

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- Whatâ??s better for the environment: Organic foods from far away or local conventional foods?
If you’re concerned about the environmental impact of your diet, eating locally produced organic food is probably not doing as much good as you think. Paradoxically, eating conventional food grown on the other side of the world and shipped to you may actually be much better for the planet in some cases. How can that be? Basic economics may help us find an answer.

**Dr. Liza Dunn is a medical toxicologist and the medical affairs lead at Bayer Crop Science. Follow her on X @DrLizaMD**

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