

[IMAGE]

## Are You Eating Your Way to Cancer?

By Editorial Staff

Not concerned with your processed food intake? After all, you don't do it all the time, right? A new study suggests even a small percentage increase in ultra-processed food consumption can increase the risk of cancer by more than that amount.

First, what's ultra-processed food? Here's how the researchers who performed this study and reported on their findings in the *British Medical Journal*, defined it: "mass produced packaged breads and buns; sweet or savoury packaged snacks; industrialised confectionery and desserts; sodas and sweetened drinks; meat balls, poultry and fish nuggets, and other reconstituted meat products transformed with addition of preservatives other than salt (for example, nitrites); instant noodles and soups; frozen or shelf stable ready meals; and other food products made mostly or entirely from sugar, oils and fats, and other substances not commonly used in culinary preparations such as hydrogenated oils, modified starches, and protein isolates."

Sound familiar? Yes, that's the commonly consumed American diet in a nutshell. Unfortunately, when the researchers evaluated cancer risk based on ultra-processed food consumption, they found a mere 10 percent increase in consumption increased cancer risk significantly (by greater than 10 percent). In other words, eating more ultra-processed foods definitely wasn't worth the risk.

But don't think your diet has to be Spartan to improve your odds. Here's the diet researchers considered *not* ultra-processed for comparison: "'unprocessed or minimally processed foods' (fresh, dried, ground, chilled, frozen, pasteurised, or fermented staple foods such as fruits, vegetables, pulses, rice, pasta, eggs, meat, fish, or milk), 'processed culinary ingredients' (salt, vegetable oils, butter, sugar, and other substances extracted from foods and used in kitchens to transform unprocessed or minimally processed foods into culinary preparations), and 'processed foods' (canned vegetables with added salt, sugar coated dried fruits, meat products preserved only by salting, cheeses, freshly made unpackaged breads, and other products manufactured with the addition of salt, sugar, or other substances of the 'processed culinary ingredients' group)."

Trust us, you don't want cancer, and anyone who's diagnosed with cancer wishes they'd made dietary, exercise and other lifestyle changes sooner. Your doctor can tell you more about healthy eating and how even small steps can make a big difference.

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