

[IMAGE]

Processed Foods: The Primary Culprit in the Obesity Epidemic

By Editorial Staff

Is a single category of food the primary culprit in the obesity epidemic sweeping across the U.S. over the past few decades? Yes, say researchers, and it's an all-too-familiar foe: processed foods. Our collective embrace of cost-efficient, more convenient foods (i.e., easier to prepare) and the food industry's willingness to provide it mean the average American's diet is overwhelmed with processed foods. ([Click here](#) to see some of the processed foods you probably consume every day without realizing they're processed.)

Why are processed foods problematic in terms of our health? One big reason is its impact on weight. According to recent review research published in *Current Treatment Options in Gastroenterology*, processed foods promote weight gain via a variety of mechanisms. When compared to a less processed diet, the problem becomes crystal clear. Let's hear it in the review authors' own words: "Recent human trials have found ultra-processed foods as a contributor to decreased satiety, increased meal eating rates, worsening biochemical markers, and more weight gain. In contrast, Blue Zone, indigenous South American, and Mediterranean populations with low meat intake, high fiber, and minimally processed foods have far less chronic diseases, obesity rates, and live longer disease-free."

Lower obesity rates, far less chronic diseases, and longer, disease-free lives? Isn't that what we're all trying to achieve? It's clear processed foods aren't going to help get us there; in fact, they're taking us in the exact opposite direction. Your doctor can tell you more about the dangers of processed foods; analyze the processed food content of your pantry, fridge and freezer; and help you make decisions moving forward to minimize your processed food intake and maximize your health and wellness.

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