

Ultra processed food

Why are ultra-processed foods and drinks bad for us?

Ultra-processed foods (UPF) and drinks are characterized by:

- Low nutritional quality, high energy density
- Contain high amounts of saturated fatty acids and high-fructose corn syrup
- Undergoing multiple industrial processes to create the final product, some create harmful compounds to Human health
- Contains additives that may be harmful
- Due to its plastic or can packing, UPF contains endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) - that may be harmful to human health






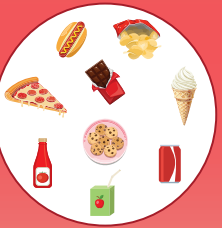
Adopted from Grinshpan LS. et al., *JHEP Reports*, 2024

High UPF consumption is associated with cardiovascular diseases, cancer, metabolic syndrome, type-2 diabetes, obesity, steatotic liver disease, & all-cause mortality

What is the practical way to identify if a product is ultra-processed?

UPF contains characteristic ingredients of no or rare culinary use in your kitchen, for example:

- Hydrolyzed proteins
- Fructose, high-fructose corn syrup
- Hydrogenated oil
- “Cosmetic additives”- flavors, colors, emulsifiers
- Palm oil
- UPF tends to be high in energy, salt, sugars and fat
- UPF is usually very easy to use, ready to eat/heat, durable, & hyper-palatable
- UPF is usually packed in plastics and cans
- The ingredients list of the UPF product usually contains more than 5 ingredients

NOVA Food Classification			
UNPROCESSED OR MINIMALLY PROCESSED FOODS	PROCESSED CULINARY INGREDIENTS	PROCESSED FOODS	ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS
<p>Foods which did not undergo processing or underwent minimal processing techniques, such as fractioning, grinding, pasteurization & others</p> 	<p>These are obtained from minimally processed food & used to season, cook, & create culinary dishes</p> 	<p>These are unprocessed or minimally processed foods or culinary dishes which have been added processed culinary ingredients. They are necessarily industrialized</p> 	<p>These are food products derived from foods or parts of foods, being added cosmetic food additives not used in culinary</p> 
Legumes, vegetables, fruits, starchy roots & tubers, grains, nuts, eggs, chicken, & milk	Salt, sugar, vegetable oils, butter & other fats	Bottled vegetables or meat in salt solution, fruits in syrup or candied, bread, cheeses, purées or pastes	Cookies, ice cream, shakes, ready-to-eat meals, soft drinks & other sugary drinks, hamburgers, & nuggets

Adopted from Oliveira P., *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 2022

How can you help your patients to reduce their UPF consumption?

- Emphasize the importance of drinking water and reduction of sugar sweetened beverage consumption
- Encourage to consume minimal or unprocessed foods in meals and/or as snacks (e.g., vegetables, fruits, natural yogurt, nuts, eggs, legumes, unprocessed fish & poultry)
- Educate on how to interpret food labeling