AMERICAN COLLEGE OF Lifestyle Medicine

Understanding Ultra-Processed Foods

Why Avoid Or Limit Ultra-processed Foods

Ultra-processed foods:

- Often don't contain vitamins and minerals which are essential for our gut health, blood pressure, and metabolism
- Don't keep us full because they often lack fiber
- Make it hard for us to know when we've eaten enough and they are often high in calories
- Are easy to overeat

It has been shown that when people eat the same number of calories, people eating ultra-processed foods gain more weight.



Least Processed → Most Processed

• **Apple**	• **Applesauce**	• **Apple Juice**	• **Apple Fruit snacks**
• **Potato**	• **Mashed Potatoes**	• **French Fries**	• **Potato Chips**
• **Corn**	• **Corn Tortilla**	• **Corn Chips**	• **High Fructose Syrup**

Focus on Whole Foods



- Plan your meals ahead to make sure you focus whole foods
- Choose more whole food versions of ultra-processed foods, like whole grain pasta instead of white pasta, or oatmeal instead of sugary cereal
- Shop the perimeter of the store to find the minimally processed foods
- When buying packaged foods, aim for choices with a short ingredient list, and avoid foods with ingredients you can't pronounce
- Have a health snack strategy
  - Keep whole food snacks on hand and easy to grab, like fruit, nuts, cut vegetables, bean dips or hummus
  - Cut down on buying things like salty snack, soda, pastries, cookies or candy to make it easier to avoid at home

Easy Ways to Add Fiber

Common Ultra-Processed Foods

INSTEAD OF...

Half a bagel = 1 gram of fiber

A glass of juice = 1 gram of fiber

A handful of chips = 1 gram of fiber

A cup of white rice = 0.5 gram of fiber

A pudding cup = 1 gram of fiber

Total Fiber: 4.5 grams

Healthy Whole Foods

EAT...

1/2 cup of oatmeal = 4 grams of fiber

1 medium orange = 3 grams of fiber

A handful of nuts = 4 grams of fiber

1/2 cup of brown rice and 1/4 cup of beans = 6 grams of fiber

1 cup blueberries = 3 grams of fiber

Total Fiber: 20 grams

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