



ULTRA-TRANSFORMED FOODS

What are they?

These are high calorie and less nutritious foods. These foods have been altered by the addition of salt, sugar, fat, preservatives and/or artificial colors. They usually contain ingredients that are not found in our pantry. They provide much less protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals. They have many added ingredients and have been extremely manipulated, they have undergone treatments (extrusion, molding, milling).

For example :

- Ready-to-serve dishes (pizza, hamburger, fries, frozen dishes, chicken or fish nuggets).
- Sweet drinks (soft drinks, punch, sports drinks, etc.).
- Sweet breakfast cereals and commercial bakery products (cakes, cookies, muffins ...).
- Salty snacks (e.g. chips, pretzels) and candies (sweets, chocolate).
- Packaged soups, crackers, sausage and cold cuts.

Some nuances / differences ...

Raw or unprocessed foods: fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen or dried), legumes, seeds and nuts, fresh meat, seafood, eggs, milk, water, rice, pasta, flour, plain yogurt.

Convenience foods: foods to which oil, sugar or herbs have been added, e.g. bread, cheese, tofu, canned foods (vegetables, fruits, legumes, fish), natural peanut/nut butter. These convenience foods help make nutritious meals ... even if they have undergone small transformations, these foods remain healthy and nutritious.

Why are we talking about them?

- Because in recent years, they represent 54% of our calories intake (vs 24% 70 years ago).
- Because they are particularly consumed by young people from 9 to 13 years of age. Nearly one third of the children are obese or overweight. Young people are the largest consumers of sweet drinks, averaging 578 ml per day, which is equivalent to 16 teaspoons of sugar!
- Because they have major impact on population health. In our country, the annual cost of food-related diseases is \$26 billion.
- Because a poor diet is now the leading risk factor for death in the country.

Why are they harmful?

These ultra-processed foods will contribute to the onset of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and the occurrence of certain cancers. In addition to increasing weight gain and hypertension, ultra-processed foods increase the risk of inflammatory bowel disease and death.

Tips to avoid them

- Avoid buying them (beware of colorful packaging with "catchy" messages) and learn to cook. Cook as often as possible (putting a pizza in the oven is not cooking).
- At the grocery store, choose whole and fresh foods. Buy local.
- Read the list of ingredients: avoid products that contain a lot of additives and ingredients you do not know! Aim for a short list of ingredients and easy to understand.
- Consider the origin of the food: a steak comes from a cow, an egg comes from a hen. If you do not know where it comes from, it may be because it was manipulated too much.
- Do not be fooled and beware of misleading ads. A natural and organic cookie remains an ultra-processed food.
- Studies show that people who eat with others have better eating habits and eat more vegetables. Eating with family and friends is a winning combination.
- In conclusion, plan, cook and eat in good company !!

References:

1. On the Plate: Ultra-Transformed Foods Associated with Cancer (CBC / Radio-Canada)
2. Time to curb our appetite for ultra-processed food (heartandstoke.ca)
3. Ultra-processed foods: recognizing them and discovering alternatives (Olo Foundation)
4. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations>

Important information

A **recipe book** made with the collaboration of the Diabetes Clinic, the Health Unit and the Lower Outaouais Family Health Team is now available. **On sale** at the Diabetes Clinic and at the Hawkesbury General Hospital Gift Shop at a cost of \$7.

Hurry, quantities are limited !!

Greek Orzo Salad

(Makes 4 servings)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of cooked orzo (or short pasta)
- 3/4 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 field cucumber, cut into cubes
- 1 red pepper (or orange or yellow), cut into pieces
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup of corn kernels
- 1/4 cup sliced black olives
- 8 oz of feta, cut into cubes
- 1 teaspoon basil, thyme or Greek seasoning
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons of lemon juice
- Pepper to taste

Method:

1. Cook the pasta and allow to cool until cold.
2. In a large bowl, add tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onions, corn, olives and feta cheese.
3. Add the herbs and seasoning. Stir well.
4. In a small bowl, add oil and lemon juice and stir well.
5. Add pasta to the mixture as well as the oil and lemon juice. Toss.

Nutritional value (per serving)

439 calories, 25 grams of fat, 41 grams of carbohydrates, 4 grams of fiber and 15 grams of protein

Recipe adapted by dietitian Nancy Lajeunesse, inspired by Coup de pouce (Greek Orzo Salad).

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