

9 – Ingredients to Avoid in Processed Foods

Healthy Living Saturday, April 17, 2010 **9 Ingredients to avoid in processed foods**

If you know me at all, you know that I'm an advocate for whole, unprocessed foods.

However, many of us inevitably turn to packaged or processed foods when we are short on time.

Maybe we grab a frozen dinner or pizza for a quick dinner for our family.

Maybe we grab a quick nutrition bar to satiate our hunger until we can sit down for a real meal.

Or maybe, we just don't like to cook.

Whether we like it or not, packaged and processed food has become a huge part of our food industry and, as a result, a part of many of our diets.

Although there are some brands that I hugely advocate for, there are many more that border on outright unhealthy and "scary."

Many packaged foods that seem healthy often contain fillers, preservatives and other ingredients you don't want in your diet. It is always preferable to choose products that have only a handful of ingredients, all of which should be recognizable.

One test to know whether an ingredient is healthy is to ask yourself whether your grandmother would recognize it.

If not, there is a good chance the ingredient is less natural food and more man-made chemical.

Another good test is whether or not you can easily pronounce the ingredient.

If you feel like you need a science degree to pronounce it properly, chances are the ingredient is worth avoiding.

If you do have to resort to a processed food for a snack or dinner (anything canned, packaged, etc.), try to avoid those that contain the ingredients listed in the following chart.

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Although this isn't an exhaustive list, these ingredients are some of the most highly processed and least healthy of all:

Ingredient	Why it is Used	Why it is Bad
Artificial Colors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical compounds made from coal-tar derivatives to enhance color. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked to allergic reactions, fatigue, asthma, skin rashes, hyperactivity and headaches.
Artificial Flavorings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap chemical mixtures that mimic natural flavors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linked to allergic reactions, dermatitis, eczema, hyperactivity and asthma Can affect enzymes, RNA and thyroid.
Artificial Sweeteners (Acesulfame-K, Aspartame, Equal®, NutraSweet®, Saccharin, Sweet'n Low®, Sucralose, Splenda® & Sorbitol)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly-processed, chemically-derived, zero-calorie sweeteners found in diet foods and diet products to reduce calories per serving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can negatively impact metabolism Some have been linked to cancer, dizziness hallucinations and headaches.
Benzoate Preservatives (BHT, BHA, TBHQ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compounds that preserve fats and prevent them from becoming rancid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May result in hyperactivity, angiodema, asthma, rhinitis, dermatitis, tumors and urticaria Can affect estrogen balance and levels.
Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chemical that boosts flavor in many citric-based fruit and soft drinks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases triglycerides and cholesterol Can damage liver, testicles, thyroid, heart and kidneys.

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<p>High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheap alternative to cane and beet sugar • Sustains freshness in baked goods • Blends easily in beverages to maintain sweetness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May predispose the body to turn fructose into fat • Increases risk for Type-2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and cancer • Isn't easily metabolized by the liver. • Can increase blood pressure • raises cholesterol • fat triglyceride • prone to clotting • accelerate the aging process • high in uric acid • increases insulin • increases cortisol - heart disease
<p>MSG (Monosodium Glutamate)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavor enhancer in restaurant food, salad dressing, chips, frozen entrees, soups and other foods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May stimulate appetite and cause headaches, nausea, weakness, wheezing, edema, change in heart rate, burning sensations and difficulty in breathing.
<p>Olestra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An indigestible fat substitute used primarily in foods that are fried and baked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhibits absorption of some nutrients • Linked to gastrointestinal disease, diarrhea, gas, cramps, bleeding and incontinence.
<p>Shortening, Hydrogenated and Partially Hydrogenated Oils (Palm, Soybean and others)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrially created fats used in more than 40,000 food products in the U.S. • Cheaper than most other oils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contain high levels of trans fats, which raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol, contributing to risk of heart disease.

Have you checked your ingredient lists recently?

Do they contain any of the above?

Have you tried cutting some of these ingredients out?

<http://shine.yahoo.com/channel/health/9-ingredients-to-avoid-in-processed-foods-1268429/>

http://www.thenutritionreporter.com/fructose_dangers.html

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