

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

Biggest chunk of calories comes from processed foods, study finds

Highly processed foods, such as prepared meals, white bread, cookies, chips, soda and candy, account for more than 60 percent of the calories in products Americans routinely buy in grocery stores, according to a new study.

This study found that many Americans have strongly held opinions and beliefs about processed foods. Some consider processed foods to be tasty, convenient, and affordable choices, while others contend that the combination of sugar, fat, sodium (salt), and flavoring in these foods promotes overeating and contributes to obesity.

Not only are highly processed foods a stable part of U.S. purchasing patterns, but the highly processed foods households are buying are higher in fat, sugar, and sodium on average than the less-processed foods (e.g., fresh or frozen vegetables and fruits, fresh meat, milk, eggs, and dried beans) they buy.

The biggest contributors to unhealthy diets and chronic disease are added sugars, excessive fat, and sodium. Too much sugar and fat may result in weight gain, increased cholesterol levels, and aggravation of other health issues. Excess sodium can lead to fluid retention and high blood pressure, putting extra stress on the circulatory system and increasing the risk for heart disease, heart or kidney failure, stroke, and other health problems.

Add a little spice to your life!

Eating less sodium, sugar, and fat may seem challenging but using herbs and spices can help! Herbs and spices help flavor foods when you cut back on dietary fat, sugar, and sodium.

You can reduce or eliminate sugar with these sweet-tasting spices: allspice, cloves, ginger, cardamom, mace, cinnamon, and nutmeg. When reducing sodium, improve the taste of recipes by adding savory flavors such as black pepper, garlic powder, curry powder, cumin, basil, and onion. Instead of using salt for your pasta, try basil, oregano, parsley, and pepper or use an Italian seasoning blend.

Sources: American Society for Nutrition, news release, March 28, 2015; www.lancaster.unl.edu/food/spiceherbshandout-color.pdf.



Pan Fried Tilapia with Orange Sauce

Serving Size: 1 fillet of fish
(about 3 ounces)

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 small frozen tilapia fillets (about 1 pound total)
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1–2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 teaspoons dried marjoram or Italian seasoning
- 1 orange

Instructions:

1. Defrost and pat tilapia dry with paper towel.
2. Put flour, garlic powder, pepper, and salt in a plastic bag. Add fillets one at a time and shake to coat.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat until hot.
4. Add fillets to skillet and fry until golden brown on one side (about 2 minutes). Turn fish over, sprinkle with marjoram or Italian seasoning, and finish browning (heat fish to at least 145°F).
5. Heat orange for 10 seconds in microwave. Cut in half. Squeeze half the juice and pulp from the orange on the fish. Use the other half for garnish.
6. Place fish on a platter. Scrape the pan juices on top of the fish to serve.

Nutrition information per serving:

160 calories, 5g fat, 1g saturated fat, 45mg cholesterol, 190mg sodium, 10g carbohydrates, 1g fiber, 4g sugar, 18g protein. Daily Values: 35% Vitamin C, 6% Iron, 4% Calcium.

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart Eat Smart website, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings>.

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Grill Food Safely

Thaw safely. Completely thaw meat, poultry, and seafood before grilling so it cooks evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water.

Marinate food in the refrigerator. If you use a marinade to enhance flavor, marinate the food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Do not reuse marinade on cooked meat that was used on raw meat. If you want to add more marinade after the meat is cooked, make up a fresh batch.

Cook to the correct temperature. Grilling browns the outside of meat, poultry, and seafood quickly, so you can't rely on color as an indication of doneness. Always use a food thermometer to ensure that the food is cooked to the safe minimum internal temperature.

Keep hot food hot. Keep cooked meats hot by setting them to the side of the grill rack, not directly over the coals where they could overcook. At home, the cooked meat can be kept hot in an oven set at approximately 200°F, in a slow cooker (135°F or higher), or on a warming tray.

Use a different plate for serving cooked meat. When taking food off the grill, don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Any harmful bacteria in the raw meat juices could contaminate safely cooked food.

Source: www.fsis.usda.gov.

Make physical activity a regular part of the day

Fitting activity into a daily routine can be as easy as walking the dog after work or adding a 10-minute walk at lunchtime. Choose activities you enjoy and mix it up.

- Join a walking group in the neighborhood or at the local shopping mall.
- Get the whole family involved—enjoy an afternoon bike ride with your kids, grandkids, or great-grandkids.
- Push the baby in a stroller.
- Clean the house or wash the car.
- Do stretches, exercises, or pedal a stationary bike while watching television.
- Mow the lawn with a push mower.
- Plant and care for a vegetable or flower garden.
- Walk, jog, skate, or cycle.
- Swim or do water aerobics.
- Take a nature walk.
- Most important—have fun while being active!

Source: www.choosemyplate.gov/physical-activity/increase-physical-activity.html.



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Do you like the healthy ideas offered in the Words on Wellness (WOW) newsletter? Are there topics you'd like to see in the newsletter? Let us know! We value your opinion and want to hear what you think. Share your suggestions by taking our voluntary survey found at https://iastate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_5jURxU5IY8KKE0R.