

Medical News in Brief

Ultraprocessed Foods Linked With 32 Types of Health Problems

Ultraprocessed foods include ready-to-eat meals, snacks, and sugary drinks that contain a long list of [ingredients and additives](#) designed to make the food sellable or palatable. Now these foods have been associated with more than 30 health conditions, a [review](#) of 45 meta-analyses involving about 9.9 million participants found.

Eating more ultraprocessed foods was linked to a higher risk of dying from any cause. There were also strong ties between higher consumption and cardiovascular disease-related deaths, mental health disorders, and type 2 diabetes. The researchers also found highly suggestive evidence that ultraprocessed foods were associated with poor sleep, obesity, and wheezing.



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The researchers, who published their findings in *The BMJ*, propose several reasons that exposure to ultraprocessed foods

might be linked with poor health outcomes. Ultraprocessed foods might take the place of meals with more produce, whole foods, and fiber. They can also expose people to unhealthy additives such as emulsifiers and increase inflammation.

Based on the findings, and because manufacturers are motivated to continue marketing unhealthy products that sell well, the author of a linked [editorial](#) wrote that public policies could include clear labeling to identify these foods, restrictions on advertising near schools and hospitals, and economic incentives to make healthier foods as accessible and cheaper than ultraprocessed ones. — **Emily Harris**

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Note: Source references are available through embedded hyperlinks in the article text online.