

7 Things You Should Never Eat or Drink

Every time you go grocery shopping, you're making decisions that will have an impact on your health. While you may be well aware that some items you toss in your grocery cart aren't the healthiest choice on the shelf, you may not realize just how unhealthy they truly are.

While one bad food may not have long-term consequences for your health, a cart full of processed foods loaded with carbs and sugar seriously endangers your health, and even some foods you may think are healthy are anything but good for you.

Here's a list of seven foods you should NEVER eat or drink:

1. Microwave popcorn. A report from the FDA found that popcorn bags are linked with a chemical called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), the same toxic chemical found in many non-stick pots and pans. PFOAs are linked to bladder cancer, thyroid problems, and high cholesterol. Some experts theorize that 20 percent of the PFO found in our bodies comes from microwave popcorn. The smell of popcorn microwaved in a commercial bag is due to a chemical called diacetyl, a synthetic butter flavoring. It causes a disease called bronchiolitis obliterans, or "popcorn worker's lung," in factory workers who inhale the fumes. Due to public concerns, some manufacturers of popcorn have eliminated diacetyl.

2. Processed meats. Hot dogs, bacon, ham, and other processed meats are loaded with unhealthy amounts of fat, salt, and preservatives, but they can also contain nitrites and nitrates, chemical additives used to enhance their taste, boost their color, and keep them from spoiling. Over 90 percent of nitrates tested have been found to cause cancer in various organs of the body, including the breast and stomach.

Bacon, salami, and other cured meats can aggravate respiratory diseases like chronic bronchitis and emphysema to the point of requiring a trip to the emergency room. Nitrates have been found to increase the risk of developing COPD, and to increase the chances of hospitalization from the disease. Nitrates can also trigger headaches in sensitive people.

3. Farm-raised fish. According to the Environmental Working Group, most farm-raised fish are fed genetically modified feed. Fish tested were also contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) at high levels, and were 16 times more likely to be contaminated than wild-caught fish. In addition, farm-fed fish were found to contain pesticides and other toxins from contaminated water that drains into ponds.

A study published in *Science* found that farmed salmon had 10 times the level of contaminants as wild salmon. Dr. David Carpenter, author of the study, told PBS that farmed salmon was so contaminated that eating more than one meal a month raised the risk for cancer. Some experts believe that some European farmed salmon should only be eaten once every four months.

4. Margarine. Although margarine was billed for decades as the healthy alternative to butter, many studies confirmed trans-fats in margarine raised cholesterol and damaged blood vessels. The more solid the margarine at room temperature, the more trans-fats it contained. Manufacturers have reformulated their products, but many health experts aren't convinced the products are healthy as many contain genetically modified and artificial ingredients.

5. Soft drinks. Whether sweetened with sugar or artificial sweeteners, sodas play havoc with your health. Sodas have been linked to the growing epidemics of obesity and diabetes. But sodas have also been linked to cancer: When sodium benzoate, used for mold prevention in many soft drinks, is mixed with vitamin C, it creates a carcinogenic substance called benzene.

British researchers also found problems with sodium benzoate—they found it might be able to switch off vital parts of DNA called mitochondria, the “power station” of cells. The result could eventually causes cirrhosis of the liver and other degenerative diseases, such as Parkinson’s.

Researchers at India’s Tata Memorial Hospital found a “very significant correlation” between soft drinks and an increased risk of esophageal cancer, and other studies have linked soft drinks to the risk of deadly pancreatic cancer.

Sodas are also linked to cardiovascular problems. A study published in *Circulation*, the journal of the American Heart Association, found that people who drank one or more soft drinks each day were 25 percent more likely to develop high blood triglycerides, and 32 percent more likely to have low levels of “good” cholesterol.

6. Artificial sweeteners. “Artificial sweeteners are a disaster,” says board-certified family physician Dr. David Brownstein. “They’re known to cause neurologic problems, autoimmune disorders, and probably cancer,” he tells Newsmax Health.

We’ve been told for decades that artificial sweeteners help keep us slim, but recent studies have caused grave doubts. Researchers at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio found those who drank diet sodas were more likely to become overweight than those who drank regular sugary sodas.

For each can of diet soda consumed each day, the risk of obesity increased by 41 percent. After 10 years, those who drank two or more diet sodas a day increased their risk of obesity by 500 percent.

Artificial sweeteners also don’t appear to lower the risk of diabetes. A study published in the journal *Nature* found that diet sodas change the microbes living in the gut in a way that

increases the risk of diabetes, and a study conducted at the University of Minnesota found that a single diet soda daily raised the risk of metabolic syndrome and diabetes by 36 percent.

Sodas may be harming women's bones. Researchers at Tufts university found that women who drank sodas, including diet sodas, had lower bone density than women who didn't drink them. The phosphoric acid in sodas leaches calcium from bones.

7. Conventionally grown potatoes. Since it's a root vegetable, potatoes absorb all of the chemicals in the soil—herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides. According to the USDA, 37 different pesticides have been found on conventionally grown potatoes. Of them, seven are possible carcinogens, nine are neurotoxins, and 12 are possible hormone disrupters. About 76 percent of all potatoes are contaminated with an herbicide called chlorpropham, which is used to keep potatoes from sprouting.

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