

FOODS TO ESCHEW

The foods listed below are more noxious than nutritious -- for you and for the earth.

1. Sodas

Teeth go rotten with Coke. A 12-ounce serving of most sodas contains 7 to 10 or more teaspoons of sugar in the form of high-fructose corn syrup, a sweetener that's linked to rising rates of obesity and diabetes. (To see what this amount of sugar looks like, check this out <http://marshallbrain.com/science/sugar-in-soda.htm>.) Diet sodas aren't much better: they're filled with aspartame, a questionable artificial sweetener, and studies show that people who drink them weigh more than those who don't.

2. Hot dogs, bacon, and processed lunch meats

It's no baloney: high-fat meats like hot dogs, salami, and just about everything in your supermarket's pre-packaged lunches and "deli aisle" are filled with hormones, antibiotics, pesticides, herbicides, and artery-clogging cholesterol and saturated fats. The latter can build up and cause strokes, heart disease, and cancers in adulthood. The nitrites in these meats are linked to increased risks of childhood cancer, too.

3. French fries

Most fries -- America's most popular vegetable dish -- wallow in cholesterol-boosting hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, aka trans fats. The fats in French fries also seem to cause more deep belly fat accumulation, putting people at risk for diabetes and heart disease. And a single serving of fast-food French fries offers dangerously high levels of acrylamide, a toxic chemical that can cause reproductive damage and cancer.

4. Doh-nuts

Just look at Homer. Doughnuts are the poster-child for food gone wrong: sugar-encased, high-fat packages of refined grains and empty calories, with food-dyed candy sprinkles on top. Plus, it's hard to eat just one.

5. Juice-flavored drinks

Some fruit juices are actually made with, uh, fruit juice. But most are only about 10 percent juice, plus water, sugar, and juice concentrate (which has almost zero nutritious value). Apple juice promotes tooth decay; over-juicing in general promotes obesity. Eat an actual raw organic fruit instead. If you're thirsty, drink some (non-bottled) water.

6. Artificial butter-flavored microwave popcorn

Artificially flavored anything is bad for you, but buttery-flavored nuked popcorn has the added problem of releasing toxic fumes, which in large amounts can cause a potentially fatal lung disease called bronchiolitis obliterans -- or what's become known as "popcorn lung." Hundreds of workers in popcorn factories already suffer from the ailment, and a prominent researcher has warned federal regulators that consumers are also at risk.

7. Chips

Whether they're potato chips, Doritos, or some other entry in this snack realm, chips are high-fat and high-sodium with almost zip nutritious value. Like French fries, many are

also filled with alarming levels of acrylamide, a chemical that forms spontaneously when starchy foods are baked or fried.

8. Chicken nuggets

Cute as they are, these golden morsels aren't much more than a greasy, breaded salt-delivery system. They're filled with cholesterol-raising fats and super-sized loads of sodium. If you've seen Morgan Spurlock's *Supersize Me*, you'll also have heard the allegations that Chicken McNuggets were once made with sick chickens. And they're prepared with chemicals like TBHQ, a form of lighter fluid. Just say McNo.