



Ultra-Processed Foods and Their Link to Chronic Disease

By Dr. Tricia Talerico, D.C., M.S., Nutr.

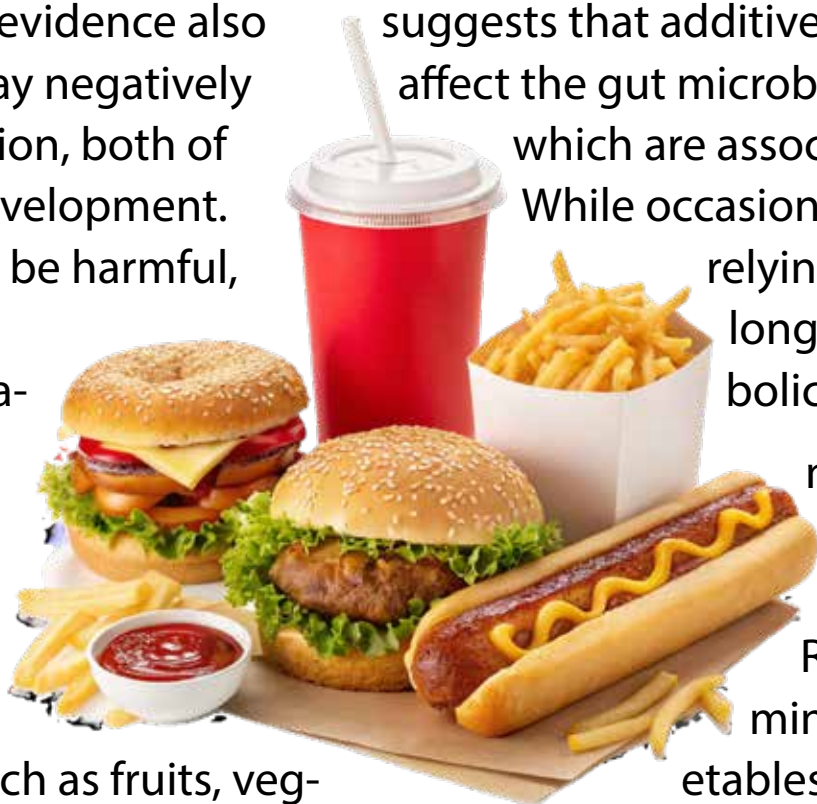
Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) have become a dominant part of the modern diet, accounting for more than half of daily caloric intake for many Americans. These products are industrially manufactured and so often contain ingredients rarely found in home kitchens, such as artificial flavors, preservatives, emulsifiers and refined starches. Some examples include sugary cereals, packaged snacks, soft drinks, fast foods, and many frozen meals. This can include vegan meals. A vegan label simply means a product contains no animal-derived ingredients. It does not guarantee that it is minimally processed or nutrient dense. In fact, many vegan convenience foods are considered ultra-processed and may contain refined grains, added sugars, seed oils, sodium, flavor enhancers, and food additives.

A growing body of research has linked high consumption of UPFs to an increased risk of chronic diseases, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, CVD, certain cancers, and depression. One reason is that UPFs are often high in added sugars, unhealthy fats, sodium, and calories while being low in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds.

Beyond poor nutrient quality, researchers believe the processing itself may contribute to health risks. Ultra-processed foods can disrupt normal appetite regulation, making it easier to consume excess calories. Studies have shown that people tend to eat more and gain weight when consuming diets high in UPFs compared to minimally processed diets, even when calorie and macro content appear similar.

Emerging evidence also in UPFs may negatively inflammation, both of disease development. unlikely to be harmful, may have es for meta-

The good small can make ference. whole or options such as fruits, veg- whole grains, and lean proteins can help improve nutrient intake and support long-term health. In other words, try shopping in the outer aisles of the grocery store!



suggests that additives commonly used affect the gut microbiome and promote which are associated with chronic While occasional consumption is relying on these foods long-term consequenc- bolic and overall health.

news is that making dietary changes a meaningful dif- Replacing UPFs with minimally-processed etables, legumes, nuts,

IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH... IMPROVE YOUR LIFE!



Tricia Talerico, D.C., M.S., Nutr.
Nutrition and Weight Loss Center of Ocean
Dow Plaza • 1819 Highway 35 North
Oakhurst, NJ 07755

732-609-3366
www.nutritionandweightlosscenter.com

