

The 10 Worst Foods

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At Truostar, there are certain foods we deem "health robbers". These foods hinder rather than help the advancement of optimal wellness. For that reason, these foods have found their way on our dreaded list of worst foods. Read on to discover why.

1. Soft drinks

The average can of pop contains between 7 and 11 teaspoons of sugar. In addition to dampening the health of the immune system, soft drinks are a major contributor to the obesity epidemic we are currently witnessing in North America. One study has found that the risk of becoming obese increased by 60% for each extra can or glass of soft drink consumed daily. Start by eliminating pop from the diet (or making it the very occasional treat) and substituting fresh, clean water or natural fruit juices.

2. Trans fats or partially hydrogenated fats

These "funny fats" have been chemically altered by the hydrogenation process. Trans fats or partially hydrogenated fats can be found in margarine, packaged baked goods, cookies, chips and vegetable shortening. Become a label reader to eliminate these fats from the diet.

Trans fats have been shown to contribute to the worsening and development of heart disease, high cholesterol, arteriosclerosis and inflammatory conditions. Healthier alternatives include cooking oils, pretzels, air popped popcorn, baked nachos, jams, jellies, dairy spreads, some natural nut butters and ghee (clarified butter).

3. Refined flour

Refined flours such as those found in white bread and pasta have been milled and stripped of their precious fibre, minerals and vitamins. Due to their lack of fibre, these foods enter the bloodstream far too quickly creating an insulin surge in the body. An over production of insulin results in weight gain, fatigue, foginess and can spill over into a myriad of other hormonal problems. It is best to replace refined flours with whole grain products such as multigrain, flax, kamut, spelt and brown rice bread and pasta.

4. Coffee

Coffee is the most commonly used drug in the world. Coffee contains the stimulant caffeine, which makes you feel more alert. As with other addictive stimulants, when coffee is removed from the diet, people report withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, irritability and fatigue. Coffee is also a diuretic that causes water loss. The rule of thumb is one cup of coffee depletes one glass of water from the body. Instead of coffee, try drinking green tea for its natural energy boost. Green tea is also a powerful antioxidant that can protect against certain diseases such as cancer and heart disease.

5. Fast food

In today's hectic world, many have turned to fast food for a quick and easy meal. Unfortunately, the typical fast food burger-and-fries order is filled with saturated fats, chemicals, refined flours and partially hydrogenated oils. Continual consumption of fast foods can be linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke. It is best to keep these food items to a minimum in your diet.

6. White sugar

White sugar, such as that found in cookies, cakes and candy suppresses white blood cell activity in the body. White blood cells are the agents that fight off harmful invaders such as viruses and bacteria. In addition, white sugar can cause blood sugar levels to surge creating symptoms such as hyperactivity followed by fatigue, foginess, weight gain and irritability. When looking for sweetness, it is best to turn to nature for natural food items such as fruits and natural fruit juices. Try making your own natural Popsicles at home. Also, when baking, substitute dates, applesauce or maple syrup for sugar.

7. Aspartame

Aspartame (also called NutraSweet, Equal, Spoonful or Equal Measure) is found in over 5000 food items such as chewing gum, diet sodas, candy and deserts. Aspartame is over 200 times sweeter than sugar with only a small amount needed to sweeten packaged goods. Unfortunately, this sweetener may be the cause of many health problems including migraines, dizziness, seizures, muscle spasms, vision problems

and heart palpitations. Aspartame contains methanol, also known as wood alcohol, that is toxic at very low levels. It is best to remove aspartame from the diet completely and substitute with natural sugars.

8. Saturated fats

Saturated fats have been labeled the bad fats. This type of fat is found in animal products, dairy items (cream, whole cheeses) and oils such as palm and kernel oil. These fats can contribute to the clogging of arteries and should be used minimally. Lowfat cheeses, lean meats and frozen natural yogurts are all excellent substitutions to saturated fat foods.

9. Food coloring

Food coloring is found in food items such as candy, baked goods, cakes, soda and sugary breakfast cereals. They contain no nutrient value and can create various symptoms in the body such as allergies and behavioral problems. Of all the food coloring, tartrazine (also called FD & C Yellow #5) is one of the most problematic creating symptoms of asthma, allergies, hives and thyroid tumors.

10. Luncheon meats

Most luncheon meats such as hot dogs and bologna contain preservatives called nitrates. Nitrates are added to meat to help keep the pinkish, red colour. Unfortunately, nitrates combine with stomach juices to form nitrosamine which has been found to be cancer causing. Try substituting with nitrate-free meats (ask your local butcher) or purchasing soy meats that are low in saturated fat and nitrate free.

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