

The Truth About Processed Foods

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Copyrighted, April 2008

It's completely accurate to say that most of the food consumed today in Western societies is chemically grown, denatured, enzyme and nutrient poor, highly processed, refined, chemical-laced, and/or over-cooked.

In the past fifty years, virtually everything about the way we produce, process, distribute, prepare, and consume our food has changed, and we're paying a terrible price for the experience.

Even before that, Dr. Clive McCay, a Cornell University nutrition researcher in the 1930's, was quoted as saying, "*the overeating of refined, processed foods is the only form of suicide tolerated by our customs, even though it is painful and tortuous.*" And he hadn't even seen fast food and junk food, the likes of which we have, today.

Beatrice Trum Hunter, nutritionist, and author of numerous books, including *The Sugar Trap*, *The Mirage of Safety*, *The Great Nutrition Robbery*, and her classic work, **Consumer Beware**, has given us a horrifying inside look at food processing. She showed us how technology, with its "chemical magic," has created foods with a shelf life of months to years, making what used to be fresh, seasonal foods available throughout the year. On this point, Dwight McKee, noted physician and research consultant said, "*The ancient Egyptians perfected the embalming of the body; modern corporate scientists have perfected the embalming of human food.*" Even the 'healthy' vegetables we occasionally eat are usually grown in low quality, chemically fertilized, nutrient-poor soils.

The basic premise of this article is that our bodies were designed to eat foods as they're found in nature, not artificial substances that are created in a lab, processed and packaged together to the point that most are not worth eating, as food.

The results of so-doing are obvious to anyone who looks objectively at what this "great experiment" has wrought. While it is true that our physiological mechanisms are so wonderfully made that, in many cases, they have proven that they can run on just about any fuel for forty to fifty years, eventually the accumulated health insults become manifested in one or more of the degenerative diseases (arthritis, Alzheimer's, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, etc.) that are now rampant, and largely unchecked in our present world. In

1981, C. Everett Koop, US Surgeon General, said, *75 percent of deaths in America are nutrition-related*, and that certainly hasn't improved any since that time.

According to three studies tracking changes in the US diet over the past 25 years, more Americans than ever are gorging on calorie-rich, nutrient-poor snacks, soft drinks and sweets when the dinner bell rings, forsaking healthy, home-cooked meals. Americans have increased their energy intake of French fries, hamburgers, cheeseburgers, pizza and Mexican food as part of their meals, concludes researchers led by Dr. Samara Joy Neilsen of the University of North Carolina.

Overall, they found that total (food) energy intake has increased over the past 20 years, with shifts away from meals to snacks and from at-home to away-from-home. We know in the United States that obesity and diabetes are on the rise, and we know that this is because of two things -- we're increasing our food energy intake across all the age groups as well as decreasing our physical activity.

Focusing on changes in diet, researchers compared the results of national US government food consumption surveys conducted in 1977-78, 1989-91 and 1994-96.

In every age group, more and more Americans now consume a large proportion of their daily food intake via snacks rather than sit-down meals, favoring quick, easy -- often non-nutritious -- foods like potato chips, cookies, pizza and other high-calorie treats.

The proportion of food energy from restaurant/fast food has increased considerably since the late 1970s. Among 19 to 39 year olds, away-from-home food consumption just about doubled between 1977 and 1996, **with 28% of young Americans saying they had eaten out on any given day in 1996, compared to just 14% two decades previously.**

Another study, presented by Dr. Alanna Moshfegh of the US Department of Agriculture, broke the survey findings down even further, looking at changes in the popularity of our favorite -- and not-so-favorite -- foods. She found steep increases in consumption of pizza, chocolate and hamburgers, in children as well as adults. Children are making a definite shift away from milk to carbonated soft drinks and other sugary drinks. While 90% of 6- to 11-year-olds in the late 1970s said they had milk on a given day, just 78% could say so by the mid-1990s.

At the same time, the daily consumption of soft drinks rose in the same age

group from 31% in the 1970s to 46% two decades later. The war between milk and soft drinks is indicative of a definite shift in the U.S. diet, where nutrient-poor "junk foods" are gradually replacing healthier items such as low-fat milk, fruits and vegetables. "*One is being consumed at the expense of the other,*" said the author of a third study, Dr. Ashima Kant of the City University of New York. Looking closely at data on children's responses to the 1988-1994 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, she found that "energy-dense, nutrient-poor" foods now account for over 30% of American children's daily energy intake, "with sweeteners and desserts jointly accounting for nearly 25%."

An article appearing in **GoAnimal.com** suggests that a diet high in real food and low in "food products" (heavily processed foods) will leave you much healthier. It points to the development of *hydrogenation and trans-fats*, and *high fructose corn syrup*, as the "*twin horsemen of our metabolic apocalypse.*" Commenting on this article, Dr. Joseph Mercola adds, "**The basic premise of this article is right on the target.** They correctly point to *trans-fats* and *high fructose corn syrup* as two of the unnatural scourges that have created an epidemic of degenerative diseases in the modern world, but I would also add *artificial sweeteners* and the vast numbers of *additives, preservatives* and *artificial flavorings* to the list. Your body was designed to eat natural foods as they are found in nature, not artificial substances that are created in a lab."

Is Processed Food Really Food, and How do You Tell the Difference?

In the article mentioned above, they suggest that "real" food can be distinguished from "food products" because "real" food is:

Naturally grown . . . Messy . . . Variable quality . . . Spoils quickly . . .
Requires preparation . . . Vibrant colors . . . Rich textures . . . Authentically
flavorful . . . Strong connection to land and culture . . .

While "food products" are:

Artificial . . . Manufactured . . . Neat . . . Convenient . . . Always the same. . .
Keeps forever . . . Instant results . . . Dull . . . Bland . . . Artificially
flavorful . . . No connection to land or culture.

The article also makes a number of further suggestions to help you make the distinction:

If it didn't exist until after 1903 (when the hydrogenation process was invented), it's probably not real food.

If it's wrapped in layers of plastic, cardboard and foil, it's probably not real food.

If it requires heavy advertising to sell it, it's probably not real food.

Real foods have flavors that your taste buds won't want to miss, so whenever you can, take a break from the grocery store and visit your local farmers markets. There you'll find fresh, whole "real" foods that your taste buds will be happy to recognize.

FACT: 90% of the money Americans spend on foods goes towards processed "food products."

FACT: The World Health Organization ranks the United States 38th in the world as a "healthy" nation.

Do you see any connection?

We are truly "guinea pigs" caught up in a vast experiment on the effects of highly industrialized living. According to Dr. Mercola, this is one of the reasons why US immigrants outlive their American-born counterparts and are less likely to die of heart disease, lung cancer and suicide. How can you possibly be healthy with that much processed food in your diet? You really need the reverse ratio to stay healthy. You can take the proactive step and aggressively implement the diet suggestions which will provide the same health benefits that those born outside the US are receiving. The main strategy? Reduce or eliminate processed foods and junk foods, sodas, grains and sugars, and eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, and spend some time in your kitchen preparing a real meal consisting of "real" food.

Even if you make the attempt to eat healthier, access to nutrient-rich food still falls short of what we need in today's toxic environment. Dr. Paavo Airola, pH. D., author of the **Handbook of Natural Healing**, the #1 International Health best-selling book, and considered to be America's foremost nutritionist, in addition to being one of the world's leading exponent of biological medicine, has been quoted as saying, "*Those who advocate eating natural foods as the only source of vitamins and minerals live in a dream world of yesterday. Yesterday's law is today's folly. You simply can't eat enough to get the nutrition you need to thrive in today's environment.*" This speaks volumes to the absolute need for whole-food and supergreens supplementation in our diets.

WARNING: New Stealth Chemicals Hidden in Your Food

As if chemical additives, artificial colorings and flavorings, irradiation, and genetically modified, nutrient-poor foods weren't enough, food manufacturers have now contrived to add a new form of chemical to the food, a "stealth" additive that modifies and covers up the lack of flavor in the foods, as they are. If you pick up a can of soup and find that the sodium levels are lower than you expected, or that a food item advertises it has "less sugar" or "no MSG," then there may be cause for alarm.

A relatively young company, Senomyx, may be putting chemicals into your food right now, without telling you and without you even realizing it. Under existing law, they don't have to inform you. These chemical compounds are not required to be listed separately on food labels because they are grouped into the general category of "artificial flavors." Senomyx has contracted with Kraft, Nestle, Coca Cola, and Campbell Soup to put a chemical in foods that masks bitter flavors by turning off bitter flavor receptors on your tongue. The companies can then reduce sugar and sodium levels by approximately half without affecting the flavor. All of the companies declined to identify which foods and beverages the chemical additives have been or will be added to.

Senomyx was able to obtain FDA approval and a "generally recognized as safe" classification from the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association in less than a year and a half, based on a safety study of rats conducted for just 3 months. That's right: one three-month long rat study is apparently enough for major food manufacturers to decide that a never-before-used chemical is safe for you and your family to eat.

Food items that are most likely to contain these new chemicals include soups, juices (fruit and vegetable), ice cream and sauces. Processed foods, by their very nature, do not taste good unless they have loads of artificial colors and flavoring agents, salt, sugar and often MSG added to doctor up the flavors. In fact, most processed foods would taste incredibly bitter if they weren't doctored up because of things like their extremely hot cooking processes and added caffeine (in soft drinks).

So what do food companies like Nestle, Cadbury Schweppes, Campbell Soup, and Coca-Cola do? They hire Senomyx, a biotech company that can skillfully manipulate your taste buds with synthetic chemicals.

The company has already developed several chemicals that, although they contain no flavor of their own, activate or block receptors in your mouth that taste. The chemicals can mimic or enhance savory, sweet and salty tastes, and are intended to reduce the use of sugar, salt and monosodium glutamate (MSG)

in processed foods. Senomyx already has 113 patents, and 371 more pending, in the United States, Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Nestle is already marketing products that contain one of Senomyx's savory enhancers, a bouillon used as a base to make soups and stews, but you would never know it because the chemical compounds are lumped in with an ingredient that is already listed on most processed foods: "artificial flavors." Unfortunately, for now it appears that these taste-bud-altering chemicals are here to stay, because both Coca-Cola and Nestle have recently extended their research agreements with Senomyx.

If You Want Chemical-Free Food ... It is becoming more important than ever to avoid processed foods. At the very least, do your best to boycott any product that lists "artificial flavors" and "artificial coloring" as ingredients.

Speaking of this, Dr. Mercola Commented: "Perhaps one day we can all simply eat cans of mush, and it won't matter because they'll contain chemicals to block and alter all of our taste receptors!"

What Can Be Done?

Action follows awareness, and anyone interested in superior nutrition, vitality, wellness and long-life, must take individual responsibility for dealing with the consequences of *"chemically grown, denatured, enzyme and nutrient poor, highly processed, refined, chemical-laced, and/or overcooked food."*

Continuing to address nutrition by doing the same thing and expecting different results is pure nonsense. And, as long as one continues to buy into any backwards, "disease care" health system that promotes treatment of symptoms at the expense of common sense preventive health care, including nutrition, nothing will change. Few, if any, would not benefit tremendously from whole food nutritional supplements.

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