

Great Debates in Nutrition, June 14, 2022

Does the Concept of 'Ultra-Processed Foods' Help Inform Dietary Guidelines, Beyond Conventional Classification Systems?

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No conflicts to disclose

Does the Concept of 'Ultra-Processed Foods' Help Inform Dietary Guidelines, Beyond Conventional Classification Systems?

• Others have asked themselves this question, including:

- Experts responsible for issuing national dietary guidelines in several countries
- Experts from national and international health associations responsible for issuing dietary guidance to prevent specific diseases

And their answer was: yes, it does help



AHA SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT

2021 Dietary Guidance to Improve Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement From the American Heart Association

Alice H. Lichtenstein, DSc, FAHA, Chair*; Lawrence J. Appel, MD, MPH, FAHA, Vice Chair*; Maya Vadiveloo, PhD, RD, FAHA, Vice Chair; Frank B. Hu, MD, PhD, FAHA; Penny M. Kris-Etherton, PhD, RD, FAHA; Casey M. Rebholz, PhD, MS, MNSP, MPH, FAHA; Frank M. Sacks, MD, FAHA; Anne N. Thorndike, MD, MPH, FAHA; Linda Van Horn, PhD, RD, FAHA; Judith Wylie-Rosett, PhD, RD, FAHA; on behalf of the American Heart Association Council on Lifestyle and Cardiometabolic Health; Council on Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology; Council on Cardiovascular Dedications and Vascular Biology; Council on Cardiovascular The EASL-*Lancet* Liver Commission: protecting the next generation of Europeans against liver disease complications and premature mortality

Tom H Karlsen*, Nick Sheron†, Shira Zelber-Sagi, Patrizia Carrieri, Geoffrey Dusheiko, Elisabetta Bugianesi†, Rachel Pryke†, Sharon J Hutchinson, Bruno Sangro†, Natasha K Martin, Michele Cecchini, Mae Ashworth Dirac, Annalisa Belloni, Miquel Serra-Burriel, Cyriel Y Ponsioen, Brittney Sheena, Alienor Lerouge, Marion Devaux, Nick Scott, Margaret Hellard, Henkjan J Verkade, Ekkehard Sturm, Giulio Marchesini, Hannele Yki-Järvinen, Chris D Byrne, Giovanni Targher, Aviad Tur-Sinai, Damon Barrett, Michael Ninburg, Tatjana Reic, Alison Taylor, Tim Rhodr-Carla Treloar, Claus Petersen, Christoph Schramm, Robert Flisiak, Marieta Y Simonova, Albert Pares, Philip Johnson, Alessandro Cucchetti, Isabel Graupera, Christos Lionis, Elisa Pose, Núria Fabrellas, Ann T Ma, Juan M Mendive, Vincenzo Mazzaferro, Harry Rutter, Helena Cortez-Pint Deirdre Kelly†, Robyn Burton, Jeffrey V Lazarus†, Pere Ginès†, Maria Buti†, Philip N Newsome†‡, Patrizia Burra*‡, Michael P Manns*‡



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Executive summary care usin Liver diseases have become a major health threat across harriers

care using multilevel interventions acting on curre barriers. Why avoidance or reduction of ultra-processed foods (UPF) is recommended?

• UPF: definition and identification

- Evidence on UPF intake and diet quality
- Evidence on UPF intake and diseases and on mechanisms

Nova: the food classification based on the extent and purpose of industrial processing

Nova groups	Examples
1) Fresh or minimally processed foods	
2) Processed culinary ingredients	
3) Processed foods	
4) Ultra-processed foods Industrial formulations made by deconstructing natural food into its chemical constituents, modifying them and recombining them with additives into products liable to displace all other Nova food groups	<image/>

Source: Monteiro et al Public Health Nutrition 2017

NUPENS





The displacement of all other Nova food groups by UPFs is facilitated by their affordable prices, convenience, craving-like palatability, and massive marketing



while their cheap ingredients make them incomparably profitable



UPF dietary share: the main metric Nova uses to assess diet quality



Total dietary intake (in kcal or g)



A practical way to identify UPFs



Ingredients: Sugar, corn flour blend (whole grain yellow corn flour, degerminated yellow corn flour), wheat flour, whole grain oat flour, oat fiber, soluble corn fiber. contains 2% or less of partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (coconut, soybean and/or cottonseed), salt, red 40, natural flavor, plue 2 turmeric color 6, annatto color blue 1, BHT for freshness Vitamins and Minerals: Vitamin (ascorbate and ascorbic acid), niacinamide. reduced iron, zinc oxide, vitamin Be (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B> (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B12.

- Food substances of exclusive or almost exclusive industrial use

UPF markers (protein isolates, gluten, casein, whey protein, 'mechanically separated meat', highfructose corn syrup, 'fruit juice concentrate', invert sugar, maltodextrin, dextrose, lactose, soluble or insoluble fibre, hydrogenated or interesterified oil)

- Cosmetic additives

(flavors, flavor enhancers, colors, emulsifiers, sweeteners, thickeners, and antifoaming, bulking, carbonating, foaming, gelling and glazing agents)

NUPEINS

USP

Nova in cell phone apps





2,369,824 products in the data base

Steel cut oats - Quaker - 709 g

Barcode: 0055577102114 (EAN / EAN-13) 055577102114 (UPC / UPC-A)

This product page is not complete. You can help to complete it by editing it and adding more data from the taking more photos using the app for Android or iPhone/iPad. Thank you!

NOVA 1

foods

Unprocessed or

minimally processed

Nutri-Score A ABCD

Very good nutritional quality



NOVA

Froot loops - Kellogg's - 410 g



Barcode: 7501008023518 (EAN / EAN-13)

This product page is not complete. You can help to complete it by editing it and adding more data from the phot taking more photos using the app for Android or iPhone/iPad. Thank you!

Nutri-Score E ABCD Bad nutritional quality

NOVA 4 Ultra processed foods





Dietary share of UPFs in nationally-representative samples of 13 countries



Dietary share of UPFs among US children and adults NHANES cycles from 2001 to 2018 % of total energy intake 70 67,0 68 66 US Children (2-19y) 64 61,5 62 60 57,0 58 56 53,5 US Adults (20y+) 54 52 50 2001-2002 2003-2004 2005-2006 2007-2008 2009-2010 2011-2012 2013-2014 2015-2016 2017-2018

Sources: Juul et al AJCN 2021 and Wang et al JAMA 2022



Annual retail sales of ultra-processed food products from 2006 to 2019



Source: Baker et al. Obesity Reviews 2020

Annual retail sales of ultra-processed drink products from 2006 to 2019



Source: Baker et al. Obesity Reviews 2020

Why avoidance or reduction of ultra-processed foods (UPF) is recommended?

• UPF: definition and identification

• Evidence on UPF intake and diet quality

• Evidence on UPF intake and disease and on mechanisms

1,044 papers in PubMed with the term 'ultra-processed'



USP



nutrients



Review

Ultra-Processed Foods and Nutritional Dietary Profile: A Meta-Analysis of Nationally Representative Samples

Daniela Martini^{1,†}, Justyna Godos^{2,*,†}, Marialaura Bonaccio³, Paola Vitaglione⁴ and Giuseppe Grosso²

¹ Department of Food, Environmental, and Nutritional Sciences, Università degli Studi di Milano, 20133 Milan, Italy; daniela.martini@unimi.it

Meta-analysis of data from national dietary surveys in 13 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Italy, Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Taiwan, the UK and the USA

MORE UPF IN THE DIET LEADS TO HIGHER ENERGY INTAKE, MORE SATURATED FAT, AND FREE SUGARS AND LESS FIBER, PROTEIN, AND POTASSIUM



Source: Martini et al 2021

Diet content of free sugar and fiber according to the UPF dietary share as predicted by the meta-analysis of 13 national dietary surveys



Source: Martini et al 2021



American Journal of Preventive Medicine

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Consumption of Ultraprocessed Foods and Diet Quality Among U.S. Children and Adults

Junxiu Liu, PhD,^{1,2} Euridice Martinez Steele, PhD,^{3,4} Yan Li, PhD,^{1,5} Dimitra Karageorgou, PhD,² Renata Micha, PhD,² Carlos A. Monteiro, PhD,^{3,4} Dariush Mozaffarian, MD, DrPH²

Methods: Data were derived from the **National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey** (2015-2018), including **9,758 adults** (aged \geq 20 years) and **5,280 children** (aged 2-19 years) with 24-hour dietary recalls (\geq 1), with analysis performed in 2020. Ultraprocessed foods were identified using the NOVA classification, with intake (% energy) assessed in quintiles. Diet quality was assessed using the validated **American Heart Association 2020 continuous primary and secondary diet scores and Healthy Eating Index 2015**.

Conclusions: Higher ultraprocessed food consumption is associated with substantially lower diet quality among children and adults.

Predicted Healthy Eating Index-2015 (95% CI)* across quintiles of UPF

US child population, NHANES 2015–2018



*Data were weighted to be nationally representative, and adjusted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and education

Predicted Healthy Eating Index-2015 (95% CI)* across quintiles of UPF

US adult population, NHANES 2015–2018



*Data were weighted to be nationally representative, and adjusted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and education.



Prevalence(%) of poor quality diets* across quintiles of UPF NHANES 2015–2018

*<40% adherence to the AHA secondary diet score; data were weighted to be nationally representative, and adjusted for age, sex, race/ethnicity, and education.

Source: Liu et al 2022

Why avoidance or reduction of ultra-processed foods (UPF) is recommended?

• UPF: definition and identification

• Evidence on UPF intake and diet quality

• Evidence on UPF intake and diseases

'More than 30 cohort studies*, adjusted for a broad range of potential confounders, have

shown prospective dose-response associations between increased UPF intake and:

obesity, visceral adiposity, increased adiposity from childhood to early adulthood,

type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemias, hyperuricemia, coronary heart disease,

cerebrovascular disease, breast cancer, non-alcoholic liver disease, Crohn's disease,

chronic kidney disease, depression, and all-cause mortality.'

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chronic kidney disease, depression, and all-cause mortality.'

*Cohorts included Harvard, Framingham, ARIC, Nhanes follow-up, EPIC, PURE, Predimed, UK Biobank, UK ALSPAC, NutriNet Santé, SUN Navarra, ENRICA Spain, Moli-sani Italy, Lifelines Netherlands, ELSA Brazil, CHNS China ...

*Journals included AJCN, JAMA, PLoS MED, BMJ, BMC Med, BMC Psyquiatry J Am Coll Cardiol, Am J Hypert, Am J Gastroenterol, Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol, Clinical Nutrition, JN, EJCN, Int J Epi ...

Source: Dicken and Batterham 2022

Three meta-analyses of high-quality cohort studies show significant pooled risk ratios for obesity, type 2 diabetes, depression, cardio and cerebrovascular disease, and all-cause mortality



a. 3. Forest plot of prospective cohort studies investigating the association between ultra-processed foods consumption and different health outcomes. P value is for st of no overall association between exposure and outcome; P_{het} is for test of no differences in association measure among studies; P estimates from heterogenei ther than sampling error. CV. cerebrovascular.

Increased risk

Decreased risk





MDPI

Review

Ultra-Processed Food Consumption and Adult Mortality Risk: A Systematic Review and Dose–Response Meta-Analysis of 207,291 Participants

Wanich Suksatan ¹, Sajjad Moradi ^{2,3,*}, Fatemeh Naeini ⁴, Reza Bagheri ⁵, Hamed Mohammadi ⁴, Sepide Talebi ⁴, Sanaz Mehrabani ⁶, Mohammad ali Hojjati Kermani ⁷ and Katsuhiko Suzuki ^{8,*}

Nutrients 2022, 14, 174

8

Author	Year Country	HR (95% CI) Weight (%)
Blanco-Rojo et al.	2019 Spain	— 1.44 (1.01, 2.07) 3.89
Rico-Campà et al.	2019 Spain	$\longrightarrow 1.62 (1.13, 2.33) 3.83$
Kim et al.	2019 USA	— 1.30 (1.08, 1.57) 12.60
Bonaccio et al.	2021 Italy	<u> </u>
Schnabel et al.	2021 France	1.14 (1.04, 1.27) 31.36
Romero-Ferreiro et	al.2021 Spain	1.15 (1.03, 1.27) 29.62
Overall (I-squared =	= 21.9%, <i>p</i> = 0.269)	1.21 (1.13, 1.30) 100.00
NOTE: Weights are from	random effects analysis	
	0.429	1 2.33

Cell Metabolism

Ultra-Processed Diets Cause Excess Calorie Intake and Weight Gain: An Inpatient Randomized Controlled Trial of Ad Libitum Food Intake

Graphical Abstract



Authors

Kevin D. Hall, Alexis Ayuketah, Robert Brychta, ..., Peter J. Walter, Shanna Yang, Megan Zhou

Correspondence kevinh@nih.gov

Clinical and Translational Report

In Brief

Hall et al. investigated 20 inpatient adults who were exposed to ultra-processed versus unprocessed diets for 14 days each, in random order. The ultraprocessed diet caused increased *ad libitum* energy intake and weight gain despite being matched to the unprocessed diet for presented calories, sugar, fat, sodium, fiber, and macronutrients. Why avoidance or reduction of ultra-processed foods (UPF) is recommended

• UPF: definition and identification

• Evidence on UPF intake and diet quality

• Evidence on mechanisms linking UPF intake to disease

Unbalanced diet nutrient profiles and displacement of whole foods are well-documented mechanisms for the association between UPF consumption and disease





Unbalanced diet nutrient profiles and displacement of whole foods are well-documented mechanisms for the association between UPF consumption and numerous chronic diseases









Review

The Role of Diet Quality in Mediating the Association between Ultra-Processed Food Intake, Obesity and Health-Related Outcomes: A Review of Prospective Cohort Studies

Samuel J. Dicken ¹^(D) and Rachel L. Batterham ^{1,2,3,*}^(D)

- ¹ Centre for Obesity Research, Department of Medicine, University College London (UCL), London WC1E 6JF, UK; samuel.dicken.20@ucl.ac.uk
- ² Bariatric Centre for Weight Management and Metabolic Surgery, University College London Hospital (UCLH), London NW1 2BU, UK
- ³ National Institute for Health Research, Biomedical Research Centre, University College London Hospital (UCLH), London W1T 7DN, UK
- * Correspondence: r.batterham@ucl.ac.uk

Abstract: Prospective cohort studies show that higher intakes of ultra-processed food (UPF) increase the risk of obesity and obesity-related outcomes, including cardiovascular disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes. Whether ultra-processing itself is detrimental, or whether UPFs just have a lower nutritional quality, is debated. Higher UPF intakes are inversely associated with fruit, vegetables, legumes and seafood consumption. Therefore, the association between UPFs and poor health could simply be from excess nutrient intake or from a less healthful dietary pattern. If so, adjustment for dietary quality or pattern should explain or greatly reduce the size of the significant associations between UPFs and health-related outcomes. Here, we provide an overview of the literature and by using a novel approach, review the relative impact of adjusting for diet quality/patterns on the



37 cohort studies that have adjusted the association between UPF intake and health outcomes for the dietary content of critical nutrients and healthy foods

Nutrients 2022, 14, 23		Nutrients 2022, 14, 23		Nutrients 2022, 14, 23		Nutrients 2022, 14, 23		
Author, Year	Cohort	Author, Year	Cohort	Author, Year	Cohort	Author, Year	Cohort	
Schnabel 2019 [102]	Nutri-Net Santé	Robatgi 2017 [113]				Leffa 2020 [135]	Impact of the "Ten	
Rico-Campa 2019 [103]	SUN	Konatgi 2017 [115]	Women's Healt Center and Obste	Monge 2021 [121]	Mexican Teachers' Cohort		Steps for Healthy Feeding of Childrer Younger Than Two Years" in Health	
Kim 2019 [104]	NHANES III		& Gynecology Cl					
	Moli-sani						Centers	
Bonaccio 2021 [105]		Leone 2021 [114]	SUN	Mendonca 2017 [122]	SUN			
				Llavero-Valero 2021 [123]	SUN	Donat-Vargas 2021 [136]	ENRICA	
		Chang 2021 [115]	ALSPAC	Srour 2020 [124]	Nutri-Net Santé			
Beslay 2020 [106]	Nutri-Net Santé			Zhang 2021 [125]	TCLSIH			
				Fiolet 2018 [126]	Nutri-Net Santé			
Mendonca 2016 [107]	SUN	Costa 2021 [116]	Pelotas-Brazil 2(Birth Cohort				NT : M (1	
Li 2021 [108]	CHNS	Srour 2019 [117]	Nutri-Net Sant	Vasseur 2021 [127]	Nutri-Net Santé	Borge 2021 [137]	Father and Child	
				Narula 2021 [128]	PURE		Cohort Study	
Koniecnzna 2021 [109]	PREDIMED-Plus	Juul 2021 [118]	Framingham Offspring Cohc			Zhang 2021 [138]	TCLSIH	
Sandoval-Insausti 2020 [110]	Seniors-ENRICA-1			Schnabel 2018 [129]	Nutri-Net Santé			
Cordova 2021 [111]	EPIC	Zhong 2021 [119]	Prostate, Lung Colorectal, and Ovarian Cance Screening Tria	Lo 2021 [130]	NHS, NHS II, HPFS			
Canhada 2020 [112]	ELSA-Brazil			Adjibade 2019 [131]	Nutri-Net Santé			
	LEGAL DIGEN	Scaranni 2021 [120]	ELSA-Brasil	Gómez-Donoso 2020 [132]	SUN			
				Rey-Garcia 2021 [133]	Seniors-ENRICA-1			
				Zhang 2021 [134]	TCLSIH	—		





Review

The Role of Diet Quality in Mediating the Association between Ultra-Processed Food Intake, Obesity and Health-Related Outcomes: A Review of Prospective Cohort Studies

Samuel J. Dicken ¹⁽¹⁾ and Rachel L. Batterham ^{1,2,3,*}

'Consistent across many studies, adjustment for fat, sugar and sodium intake, or adjustment for adherence to a range of healthy or unhealthy dietary patterns has a minimal impact on the adverse associations between UPF intake and a diverse range of health-related outcomes.

These findings strongly point towards aspects of ultra-processing as being important factors that impact health, and question the ability to conclude that the adverse outcomes from UPFs can be solely attributed to their nutritional quality'.

Cell Metabolism

Ultra-Processed Diets Cause Excess Calorie Intake and Weight Gain: An Inpatient Randomized Controlled Trial of Ad Libitum Food Intake

Graphical Abstract



In line with Dicken & Batterham review of 37 cohort studies

In Brief

Clinical and Translational Report

'The ultra-processed diet caused increased ad libitum energy intake and weight gain **despite being matched to the unprocessed diet for presented calories, sugar, fiber, and macronutrients.**'

Potential mechanisms for UPF health effects other than the deterioration of dietary nutrient profiles and displacement of healthy foods

- 1) Reduced phytochemicals (Martinez-Steele & Monteiro 2018)
- 2) Phthalates/Bisphenol A released from packaging materials (Martinez-Steele et al. 2020)
- 3) Acrylamid and other neoformed substances (Morales et al 2020)
- 4) Quasi-addictive properties (Gearhardt 2021)
- 5) Potentially harmful additives (Debras et al 2022)
- 6) Increased energy intake rate (Forde et al 2020)
- 7) Increased glycemic response (Fardet 2016)
- 8) Reduced satiety (Fardet 2016, Dioneda et al 2020)
- 9) Reduced thermic effect (Dioneda et al 2020)
- 10) Pro-inflammatory gut microbiota (Zinocker & Lindseth 2018)







It is very likely that different combinations of mechanisms link UPF to different diseases (fascinating area for research)





But do we need to know the exact combination of mechanisms that link ultra-processed food to each disease before recommending for people to reduce or avoid its consumption?



AHA SCIENTIFIC STATEMENT

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Executive summary care usin

care using multilevel interventions acting on current barriers



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Universities and research centers where UPF studies were undertaken

- US: Harvard, NYU, Tufts, UNC, Columbia, John's Hopkins, CDC, NHI ...
- Canada: Montreal, Toronto, PHA/Ottawa ...
- UK: Imperial College, Cambridge, Manchester, City University ...
- Australia: Melbourne, Deakin, Sydney ...
- Netherlands: VU Amsterdam, Wageningen, Utrecht ...
- France: Sorbonne Paris Nord ...
- **Spain**: Navarra, NIH Carlos III/Madrid, UAM/Madrid ...
- Italy: Florence, IRCCS/Pozzili, Mediterranea Cardiocentro/Napoli, Insubria/Varese
- Sweden: Karolinska

- Norway: Oslo NUC, OsloMet, NIPH Oslo ...
- Portugal: Porto, Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro
- Japan: Kagawa/Saitama ...
- China: Wuhan, Qingdao, Chongqing ...
- Taiwan: School of Public Health/Taipei
- Korea: Seoul National University ...
- Brazil: USP, UFMG, UFPEL, UFRGS ...
- Mexico: NIH/Cuernavaca, UAM/Mexico ...
- Chile: INTA ...
- Colombia: Antioquia, Javeriana ...
- Argentine: CESNI, FIC/Buenos Aires ...
- **Uruguay**: Universidad de la Republica ...

