

Ultra-Processed Foods

1. Warm-up

Read the text and answer the questions.

Ultra-processed foods, often called **UPFs**, are food items **processed** in factories with many ingredients and **additives**. UPFs are usually less healthy due to higher amounts of sugar, fat, and salt. They are **convenient** and long-lasting but often **manipulated** with additives to make them more **palatable**. Food companies process their products to make a **profit**, not for our health.

1. How do you feel about ultra-processed foods?
2. In your opinion, can UPFs be avoided? Why or why not?

How did your opinion compare?

Are UPFs bad for us? The short answer is yes. A recent study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics found that ultra-processed foods are linked to higher mortality rates. The study showed that for every 10% increase in calories from ultra-processed foods, there was a 9% increase in the risk of death. This statistic is alarming, especially considering that 50% to 73% of the average North American's daily calories come from ultra-processed foods.

To reduce the intake of processed foods, follow these tips:

1. *Read food labels and avoid products with ingredients you can't pronounce.*
2. *Cook at home more often.*
3. *Choose whole foods over processed ones.*
4. *Limit junk food like cookies, granola bars, soda, and chips.*
5. *Plan your meals ahead of time and prepare healthy options to freeze for busy days.*

Remember, you're in charge of your health!

2. Video

Watch the video "Avoid Ultra-Processed Foods: 5 Simple Steps for Better Health" (from 7:04 to 12:30).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8D6esShpCA&t=424s&ab_channel=TalkingWithDocs

3. Vocabulary

Complete with correct prepositions.

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) are a result **of** the human need to process and preserve food **for** survival. At first, processing food was essential for long journeys and harsh seasons, ensuring people didn't fall ill or starve. However, **around** the First and Second World War, the focus shifted **to** convenience and practicality. **With** more people working and less time to cook, easy options like TV dinners became popular. Companies design these products intentionally to be convenient and tasty, prioritizing profits and sales **over** health. It can be inconvenient to cook at home, but we must be aware of the health impacts of consuming too many ultra-processed foods.

Every evening, I make sure to prepare a healthy dinner **by** following some simple tips to avoid ultra-processed foods. First, I carefully read **through** the labels on all ingredients and steer clear of any with names I can't pronounce. I prefer cooking **over** home so I can have full control **at** what goes into my meals. My shopping list consists of whole foods like fresh vegetables, fruits, and lean meats, steering clear of processed options. I keep junk food like cookies, granola bars, soda, and chips to a minimum in my pantry. **On** weekends, I plan out my meals for the week and prepare healthy dishes **in** advance, freezing portions for busy days. This way, I always have nutritious options **at** hand, making it easier to eat well and stay healthy.

Complete with correct words from the word bank.

WORD BANK: processed, palatable, additives, ultra-processed foods, manipulate, profit.

Avoiding **ultra-processed foods** is really hard because they are everywhere. Even though I try my best, these heavily **processed** foods still end up in my meals, filled with **additives** that make them taste better and last longer. It's annoying how companies **manipulate** our food with these additives, focusing on convenience and taste rather than health. They just want to make a **profit** without caring about how it affects us. I don't care how **palatable** the food is, it's upsetting that my health is at risk just so they can make money. Every time I go to the grocery store, it feels like I'm surrounded by UPFs that are meant to trick me.

4. Pronunciation

Practice pronunciation using the dialogue.

Brad: Paul, I think **ultra-processed foods** are bad for us. These foods are full of **additives** and are designed to **manipulate** our taste buds. Companies care more about **profit** than our health, making these foods taste good but bad for our well-being.

Paul: I understand, Brad, but **UPFs** have made life more convenient. They were created to help preserve food for long journeys and harsh seasons. With our busy lives, having **convenient** food options is important.

Brad: But these quick solutions harm our health. Companies **manipulate** our food with **additives** to improve flavor, texture, and shelf life. They focus more on **profit** than our health. This leads to many health problems, like obesity and heart disease.

Paul: It's true we need to be careful, but completely avoiding **UPFs** is not realistic for most people. We should focus on making informed choices. Reading labels and choosing whole foods whenever we can help balance **convenience** and health.

Brad: That's why I prefer cooking at home. By planning meals and preparing healthy options in advance, I avoid needing **UPFs**.

Paul: It's about finding a balance. We should educate people about **UPFs'** effects and encourage healthier choices without making it all or nothing.

5. Practice

Write your response or discuss.

Following these 5 tips, write or tell which tips are easier and which more difficult and why.

1. Read food labels and avoid products with ingredients you can't pronounce.
2. Cook at home more often.
3. Choose whole foods over processed ones.
4. Limit junk food like cookies, granola bars, soda, and chips.
5. Plan your meals ahead of time and prepare healthy options to freeze for busy days.

Remember, you're in charge of your health!

6. Summary and Review

Ultra-processed foods, often called UPF, are everywhere, and most people cannot avoid them daily. We can strive to eat less of it, but it's difficult because the human race wouldn't exist without figuring out how to process food. When exploring, people needed to learn how to take and preserve food

to make it last longer, so they didn't get sick or die during long journeys or winter months.

In the past, food processing was mainly for survival, but around the First and Second World War, it became about convenience and practicality. Society saw it as progress. People started working more, there was less time to cook, leading to the popularity of easy options like TV dinners.

UPFs are intentional in their design. While they are **convenient** and long-lasting, they are often **manipulated** with **additives** to make them more **palatable**. This process takes food preparation out of the home and into industry, where the focus is on **profits** and sales, not health. Companies aim to make food taste better, last longer, and sell more. Some companies focus on clean and organic foods, but they often struggle to stay in business. Processing food at home is common and necessary, but we need to be aware of the health impacts of ultra-processed foods.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8D6esShpCA>