



Nutrition Education



Look for Hidden Sugar and Sodium

Some processed foods may contain higher amounts of added sugar and sodium, so it's always helpful to check the Nutrition Facts Label.

Choose foods labeled no salt added, low-sodium or reduced-sodium to decrease the amount of salt you're consuming from processed food.

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Processed Foods Explained

“Processed Food” is a broad term and in recent years has gotten a bad rap. While processed fast foods, chips, candy, and junk food are the types of processed foods to limit, there are processed foods which can be a part of a healthy diet and many have a place in your daily routine.

Processed foods come in many different levels of processing and can include foods that have been canned, frozen, pre-cooked, fortified, and even nutritionally altered.

Types of processing:

- **Unprocessed food** is as it would be found in nature such as unpeeled oranges, bananas, carrots and lettuce. These are generally higher in nutrients and fiber.
- **Minimally processed foods** are often simply prepared in advance for convenience. This can include bagged spinach, pre-cut vegetables and roasted nuts. Other foods with less processing include those processed at their peak to lock in nutritional quality and freshness like canned tomatoes, frozen fruits and vegetables, and canned tuna. This is a convenient way to access prepared foods and the type of processed foods that provide valuable nutrients.
- **Heavily processed food** may have a long list of ingredients, yet contains few nutrients and fiber. This includes microwavable dinners and pre-made frozen meals as well as ready-to-eat-foods such as chips, deli meats, cereals, and crackers. This is the type of processed food to limit.

