

7 Foods that Should Never Cross Your Lips

By Susan McQuillan

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We all know we shouldn't overdo it when it comes to some foods and beverages—like French fries, corn chips, sodas and milkshake-style coffee drinks—because they're high in calories, fat, sugar, and salt and low in essential nutrients. But some "junk" foods are just so over-the-top unhealthy, they could be downright dangerous for you. Put these at the very top of your "Do Not Eat!" list.

Processed Meats. Long before Harvard researchers announced that eating processed meats such as hot dogs, cold cuts, bacon and sausages increases your risk of developing heart disease and diabetes more than plain red meat, these foods were suspect. There are alternatives: uncured hot dogs and sausages made from chicken and turkey, and meat analogs, or "mock meat" cold cuts and bacon-like products made with soy protein. Don't kid yourself, these alternatives are still processed foods that ought to be limited in your diet, but they usually contain less fat and often, fewer or more natural additives.

Frozen Entrées. Never trust a frozen meal that comes in its own heatable tray. At best, you'll get a school days' sense memory of warmed over cafeteria food. But you *know* that food wasn't good for you, and neither is the supermarket version. A typical Salisbury steak dinner with gravy, mashed potatoes and corn rings in at 39 gram of fat and a whopping 2,293 mg of sodium—a full day's limit in one small tray of food. Not much more can be said for most frozen pot pies, pastry pockets and breakfast sandwiches. But somewhat healthier versions of these convenience foods do exist, so if you must indulge, check and compare the Nutrition Facts and ingredients labels on similar products before you buy.

Movie Popcorn. Movie theater "butter" flavoring for popcorn is chemical soup at its finest. And with the amount of the fat typically used in popping movie theater popcorn, there's just no need for additional fatty topping. If you can't carry in your own low-fat, low-salt bagful, but also can't give up the enjoyment of popcorn at the movies, resist squirting on that extra layer of oil and additives.

Layered Burgers. A double, triple or quadruple fast-food burger means double, triple or quadruple the calories, fat and salt content. Anything more than a single burger on a single (preferably whole-grain) bun spells excess.

Deep Fried Junk Food. Deep fried snack cakes, cookies and candy bars. Really, most deep-fried foods are not healthful choices, but some novelty fried foods go someplace deeper and darker than plain unhealthy. It's best to avoid any type of fried dough-funnel cakes, zeppoles and doughnuts are nothing more than fried white flour and sugar—but when you see a batter fried, chocolate crème-filled cookie, or anything like it, it's time to run for your life.

Pork Rinds. As if pork rinds—sliced pig skin fried in pig fat (lard) or oil—aren't questionable enough, they now come with a wide variety of enticing added flavoring, like BBQ, salt & vinegar, habanero pepper, cheese nacho and—are you ready for this—chocolate-dipped. Don't let the high-protein claims fool you; this is *not* a health food!

The Frosting on the Cake. Canned cake frosting is made with sugar, hydrogenated fat, corn starch, corn syrup, salt and half a dozen chemicals that add color and flavor and ensure the product's consistency and "freshness." Need we say more? Next time, celebrate with a fresh fruit topping or even a small dollop of real whipped cream.

The bottom line on all of these foods is that they're just not necessary. Healthier alternatives are available, and when you stop eating junk food, it doesn't take long for your taste buds to readjust to the natural flavor of fresh food, undisguised by enormous quantities of added fat, sugar and salt.

Sources:

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Source: QualityHealth.com