

11 'health foods' that are actually very harmful.

1. Fruit Juices

The fruit juices you find at the supermarket aren't always what they seem.

They may have small amounts of real fruit in them, but often they are little more than water, artificial flavour and **sugar**.

But even if you're drinking real fruit juice, it is still a bad idea.

Fruit juice is like fruit with most of the good stuff removed.

All that is left is the sugar and a few vitamins. Orange juice, for example, contains **the same amount** of sugar as Coca Cola.

There's no fibre in it, no chewing resistance and nothing to stop you from downing massive amounts of sugar in a short amount of time.

Eating too much sugar is associated with all sorts of diseases. These include obesity, type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease and many others (**1, 2, 3**).

It is much better to avoid fruit juices and eat real fruits instead.

Bottom Line: **Most fruit juices** contain the same amount of easily digestible sugar as **sugar-sweetened soft drinks**. It is best to eat whole fruits instead.

2. Whole Wheat

It is true that whole wheat is healthier than refined wheat.

But this does NOT mean that whole wheat is healthy.

It's kind of like saying that because filtered cigarettes are healthier than unfiltered cigarettes, everyone should be smoking filtered cigarettes. It's flawed logic.

There are plenty of good reasons to **avoid wheat...** both the refined and the whole variety.

For example, **wheat is the main source of gluten** in the diet and **a large part** of the population may be gluten sensitive (**4, 5, 6**).

The immune system of susceptible individuals attacks the gluten proteins in the digestive tract. This can cause damage to the lining of the digestive tract, pain, bloating, tiredness, stool inconsistency and other nasty symptoms (**7, 8, 9**).

One study shows that wheat fibre can make you **Vitamin D** deficient, making you burn through your stores of this important vitamin much faster (**10**).

Another study shows that whole wheat raises small, dense LDL (the truly "bad" cholesterol) by a whopping 60% (**11**).

Bottom Line: Whole wheat is rich in **gluten and can cause digestive problems** and various symptoms. It may also cause Vitamin D deficiency and elevated small, dense LDL cholesterol.

3. Agave Nectar

In the health food aisle at the supermarket, you will definitely find some "sugar-free" products that are sweetened with Agave.

This sweetener is touted as a healthy alternative to sugar because it is natural has a low glycaemic index.

But the **harmful effects of sugar** have little to do with its glycaemic index, it is harmful primarily because it is loaded with unnatural amounts of **fructose**.

Too much fructose in the diet can cause all sorts of problems, especially in **people who don't exercise much**.

All fructose is metabolized by the liver. If the liver is full of glycogen the fructose will be turned into fat (**11, 12**).

This can cause non-alcoholic fatty liver disease and all kinds of metabolic problems like resistance to the hormones insulin and **leptin**, which will ultimately lead to **obesity and diabetes** (**13, 14, 15, 16**).

While regular sugar is 50% fructose, the fructose content of Agave is as high as 90%. If anything, agave is even worse than sugar!

Bottom Line: Agave nectar is loaded with fructose and therefore causes all the same problems as regular sugar and High Fructose Corn Syrup.

4. Sports Drinks

Sports drinks were designed for athletes who have just finished an intense training session with massive sweating and glycogen depletion.

For this reason, sports drinks contain:

- Water – to replenish lost fluid.
- Electrolytes – to replenish electrolytes like sodium that were lost via sweat.
- Sugar – because athletes need energy after an intense workout.

You don't need any additional electrolytes unless you've been doing a very intense workout and most people are already eating **too much sugar**.

One bottle of Gatorade contains over 30 grams of sugar.

You're better off sticking to plain water, which you should certainly drink plenty of, especially around workouts.

Bottom Line: If you're not doing super intense workouts, then you should avoid sports drinks. They are not needed and contain sugar.

5. “Heart-Healthy” Vegetable Oils

As the **fear of saturated fat** took hold of the world, consumption of all kinds of nasty ingredients increased.

Prime examples are industrial **seed- and vegetable oils** like soybean, corn and cottonseed oil.

These oils are extracted from seeds using very harsh processing methods and include high heat, bleaching and the toxic solvent hexane.

These oils contain very large amounts of **Omega-6 fatty acids**, way more than humans ever consumed throughout evolution.

We need small amounts of these fatty acids in the diet, such as the amounts found in **meat** and nuts. However, if we eat way too much like is the case with Western populations, this causes problems (**17**).

Eating too much of **these fats can lead to inflammation**, which is a leading cause of many chronic diseases (**18**).

These oils get incorporated into our body fat stores and cellular membranes, where they are highly sensitive to oxidation and damage.

To top it all off, the industrial vegetable oils that you find in the supermarket contain 0.56-4.2% of their fatty acid as trans fats, which are highly toxic (**19**).

(This does not apply to **olive oil**, which is good for you!)

Bottom Line: Vegetable oils are unhealthy and lead to inflammation. They are potential key players in the epidemic of Western diseases.

6. Low-Fat or Fat-Free Foods

It isn't the fat, people!

Despite the last decades of propaganda against **saturated fats**, they have now been proven to be harmless (**20, 21**).

When the anti-fat message **first came out**, food manufacturers started producing “healthy” products that were low-fat or fat-free.

The only problem is that foods that have had the fat removed taste like crap.

The food manufacturers then loaded their products with **chemicals**, artificial sweeteners and massive amounts of sugar.

What they basically did was remove the good stuff (fat) and replace it with bad stuff (sugar).

This is how they managed to turn **perfectly healthy foods** like yogurt into very harmful products filled with unhealthy ingredients.

Bottom Line: Avoid everything labelled “low-fat” or “fat-free.” These are highly processed products loaded with sugar and other harmful substances.

7. Gluten-Free Junk Foods

Many people have started to avoid gluten... a protein found in wheat, spelt, rye and barley (and a few other grains).

Almost **a third** of the U.S. population currently wants to **cut back on gluten** or go gluten-free.

Food manufacturers have caught up on the trend and have started offering all sorts of gluten-free “health foods.”

The problem with these foods is that they're usually not healthy at all.

Instead of a gluten grain, they're made with other starches like potato starch, tapioca starch or some others. These starches are usually highly refined, void of nutrients and spike blood sugar fast, just like wheat.

But these products are often also loaded with sugar and other harmful or artificial chemicals.

This does NOT apply to foods that are naturally gluten free, like meats or vegetables. If a product says "gluten-free" on the package, then it's probably bad for you.

Bottom Line: Gluten-free foods are highly processed foods that are not much healthier than their gluten-containing counterparts. It's best to avoid them.

8. Margarine and Fake Butters

Another side effect of the anti-fat hysteria is a plethora of so-called "healthy" butter alternatives.

The most notable example of these is margarine. It used to be loaded with trans fats, now it tends to contain processed vegetable oils instead.

Butter consumption went down; margarine consumption went up.

The problem with this is that **butter is healthy**. Margarine is NOT.

Grass-fed butter, in particular, is an excellent source of the fatty acid butyrate and Vitamin K2, both of which can have powerful positive effects on health (22, 23).

Margarine is a processed food with harmful ingredients that can make you sick.

In one large study, replacing butter with margarine lead to a drastically increased risk of death from heart attacks (24).

This is one great example of where blindly following the mainstream advice can put you in an early grave.

Bottom Line: Margarine is a processed food that contains unhealthy, artificial ingredients. Avoid it, use real grass-fed butter instead.

9. Energy Bars

Energy bars are in the same boat as sports drinks – most people don't need them.

If you're an elite athlete who desperately needs to keep protein intake high and eat every 2-3 hours, then these bars can definitely be convenient.

However, most people don't need to **eat that often** and these bars don't contain anything that you can't get from real foods.

Energy bars and protein bars are often highly processed products. Even though they may be higher in protein than chocolate bars, they often still contain the same unhealthy ingredients.

Sugar, white flour, artificial flavour... you name it, they've got it.

Of course, there are some healthier brands available, but if you want to avoid the crap then you must read labels!

If you're starving and far away from home, then healthier types of energy bars can certainly be better than a burger and a coke, but your money is still better spent on real foods.

Bottom Line: Energy and protein bars are often highly processed products. Most people don't need them and they tend to contain sugar and other nasty ingredients.

10. Low Carb Junk Foods

As people have changed their mind on fat being the root of all evil, some people have started cutting back on carbs instead.

Again, food manufacturers have caught notice and brought all sorts of **low-carb** junk foods to the market.

Even though something is low in carbs and can help you **lose weight**, it may still be very unhealthy.

Great examples are the low-carb Atkins bars. These are nasty, highly processed products that nobody should be eating.

Just check out the **ingredients list** for this Atkins Advantage bar. This isn't food.

If you're going to do a low-carb diet, stick to real, unprocessed foods.

Bottom Line: There are some low-carb processed foods on the market that are extremely unhealthy and loaded with artificial ingredients.

11. “Healthy” Breakfast Cereals

Most highly processed breakfast cereals are not healthy.

In fact, they are among the **worst foods** you can eat.

They're often loaded with sugar and refined carbohydrates.

Then the manufacturers fortify them with some synthetic vitamins and put tiny amounts of whole grains in the mix, then market their products **as healthy**.

Don't be fooled by the labels... low-fat, fat-free, whole grain, etc. Just check the ingredients list on these products, they're usually loaded with sugar.

Starting the day with a high-sugar cereal will set you up for a blood sugar crash later in the day, followed by hunger, **cravings** and another high-carb meal.

12. Anything Else?

If the packaging of a food tells you that it is healthy, then it probably isn't.