

### *Some of the foods that can cause chronic inflammation include*

Chronic inflammation can be caused by many factors, including a sedentary lifestyle, stress and sometimes an unbalanced diet.

In these cases, certain foods can be particularly harmful for your body. In particular, if we eat these foods in large quantities and over a long period of time, they can cause inflammation that can have long-term effects on our health.

In this picture gallery, you will find some of the worst foods that can cause chronic inflammation, and find out why you should avoid them to keep your body healthy.

#### **Trans fats**

Some packaged foods, such as cakes, still contain trans fats, although most brands are now free of them. Trans fats can actually cause systemic inflammation in the body and their consumption has been linked to coronary heart disease. Beware of the label "partially hydrogenated fats" in the ingredients list. (Source: biomedcentral.com)



#### **Red meat**

Red meat is one of the riskiest foods because it is high in arachidonic acid and saturated fatty acids. Excessive consumption can contribute to increased inflammation. The advice is to reduce red meat consumption in favour of plant-based foods, which are lower in saturated fat.



### **Refined carbohydrates**

Foods such as white flour, white bread and white rice contain refined carbohydrates, which can cause chronic inflammation (Source: [biomedcentral.com](https://www.biomedcentral.com))



### **Added sugars**

Foods that can cause chronic inflammation include packaged cereal bars, cereals, snacks and some coffee drinks available in supermarkets. This is due to added sugars, which are present in high amounts in some products (Source: [frontiersin.org](https://www.frontiersin.org))



## 21 Reasons to Eat Real Food

Source: [https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/21-reasons-to-eat-real-food#TOC\\_TITLE\\_HDR\\_11](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/21-reasons-to-eat-real-food#TOC_TITLE_HDR_11)

Real food is food that is as close to its natural state as possible.

It is primarily:

- unprocessed
- free of chemical additives
- rich in nutrients

While processed foods are convenient, they can also potentially affect your health. So following a diet based on real food may be one of the most important things you can do to help maintain good health.

### Reasons to eat real food:

#### **Loaded with important nutrients**

Unprocessed animal and plant foods can help provide vitamins and minerals you need for optimal health.

For instance, 1 cup (149 grams) of red bell peppers, kiwi (180mg) or orange slices (165 grams) contains more than 100% of the RDI for vitamin C.

Eggs and liver are especially high in choline, a nutrient essential for proper brain function.

And a single Brazil nut provides all the selenium you need for an entire day.

In fact, most whole foods are good sources of vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial nutrients.

#### **Low in sugar**

Some research suggests that eating sugary foods can increase your risk for obesity, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, and heart disease.

Generally speaking, real foods tend to be lower in added sugar than many processed foods.

Even though fruit contains sugar, it's also high in water and fiber, making it much healthier option than having soda and processed foods.

#### **Heart healthy**

Real food is packed with antioxidants and nutrients that support heart health, including magnesium and healthy fats.

Eating a diet rich in nutritious, unprocessed foods may also help reduce inflammation, which is considered one of the major drivers of heart disease.

### **Better for the environment**

The world population is steadily growing, and with this growth comes increased demand for food.

However, producing food for billions of people can take a toll on the environment.

This is partly due to the destruction of rainforests for agricultural land, increased fuel needs, pesticide use, greenhouse gases, and packaging that ends up in landfills.

Developing sustainable agriculture based on real food may help improve the health of the planet by reducing energy needs and decreasing the amount of nonbiodegradable waste that humans produce.

### **High in fiber**

Fiber provides many health benefits, including boosting digestive function, metabolic health, and feelings of fullness.

Foods like avocados, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and blackberries are particularly high in healthy fiber, alongside beans and legumes.

Consuming fiber through whole foods is better than taking a supplement as it keeps you feeling fuller longer, and you also get the added nutrients from the fruit or vegetable.

### **Helps manage blood sugar**

According to the International Diabetes Federation, more than 450 million people live with diabetes worldwide.

Eating a diet high in fibrous plants and unprocessed animal foods may help reduce blood sugar levels in people who have or are at risk for diabetes.

In one 12-week study, people with diabetes or prediabetes followed a paleolithic diet combining fresh meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, eggs, and nuts. They experienced a 26% reduction in blood sugar levels.

### **Good for your skin**

In addition to promoting better overall health, real food can help nourish and protect your skin.

For instance, dark chocolate and avocados have been shown to protect skin against sun damage.

Studies suggest that eating more vegetables, fish, beans, and olive oil may help reduce wrinkling, loss of elasticity, and other age-related skin changes.

What's more, switching from a Western diet high in processed foods to one based on real food may help prevent or reduce acne.

### **Helps lower triglycerides**

Blood triglyceride levels are strongly influenced by food intake.

Since your triglyceride levels may increase when you consume sugar and refined carbs, it's best to minimize these foods.

In addition, including unprocessed foods like fatty fish, lean meats, vegetables, and nuts has been shown to significantly reduce triglyceride levels.

### **Provides variety**

To keep your diet interesting, you can include diverse foods, such as trying vegetables that you have never had.

Hundreds of different real food options exist, including a wide variety of meat, fish, dairy, vegetables, fruits, nuts, legumes, whole grains, and seeds.

Make a point of regularly trying new foods. Some unique options include chayote squash, chia seeds, organ meats, kefir, and quinoa.

### **Costs less in the long run**

It's said that real food is more expensive than processed food.

In an analysis of 27 studies from 10 countries, it was found that eating healthier food costs about \$1.56 more than processed food per 2,000 calories.

However, this difference can be minimal when compared to the cost of managing chronic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity.

For instance, one study noted that people with diabetes spend 2.3 times more on medical supplies and other healthcare costs than those who do not have this condition.

Thus, real food costs less in the long run because it's more likely to help keep you healthy, minimizing your medical costs.

### **High in healthy fats**

Unlike the trans and processed fats found in vegetable oils and some spreads, most naturally occurring fats are better to have.

For example, extra virgin olive oil is a great source of oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat that promotes heart health.

Seeds are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. Long-chain omega-3 fatty acids help fight inflammation and protect heart health and fatty fish, such as salmon, herring, and sardines, are also excellent sources.

Other real foods that are high in healthy fats include avocados, and nuts.

### **May reduce disease risk**

Making real food part of your lifestyle may help reduce your risk for disease.

Eating patterns — like the Mediterranean diet — based on whole, unprocessed foods have been shown to reduce your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome.

In addition, several large observational studies link a balanced diet heavy in fruits and vegetables to a decreased risk of cancer and heart disease.

### **Contains antioxidants**

Antioxidants are compounds that help fight free radicals, which are unstable molecules that can damage your body's cells.

They are found in all real foods, especially plant foods like vegetables, fruits, nuts, whole grains, and legumes. Fresh, unprocessed animal foods also contain antioxidants — though in much lower levels.

For instance, egg yolks offer lutein and zeaxanthin, which can help to protect against eye diseases like cataracts and macular degeneration.

### **Good for your gut**

Eating real food may be beneficial for your gut microbiome, which refers to the microorganisms that live in your digestive tract.

Indeed, many real foods function as prebiotics — food that your gut bacteria ferment into short-chain fatty acids. In addition to promoting gut health, these fatty acids may improve blood sugar management.

Real food sources of prebiotics include garlic, asparagus, and cocoa.

### **May help prevent overeating**

According to research, a high intake of processed and fast foods has been linked to a higher rate of overeating, particularly in those who are overweight compared to those who are not at a higher weight.

By contrast, real food doesn't harbor the sugars and flavorings that load down processed foods and may drive overeating.

## **16. Promotes dental health**

Healthy teeth may be another benefit of real foods.

The sugar and refined carbs in the Western diet can promote dental decay by feeding the plaque-causing bacteria that live in your mouth. The combination of sugar and acid in soda is especially likely to cause decay.

Additionally, cheese seems to help prevent cavities by increasing pH and hardening tooth enamel. One study found that eating cheese dramatically improved enamel strength in people with limited saliva production.

Green tea has also been shown to protect tooth enamel. One study found rinsing with green tea significantly reduced the amount of erosion that occurred when people drank soda and brushed their teeth vigorously.

### **May help reduce sugar cravings**

A diet based on real food may also help reduce cravings for sweets like cakes, cookies, and candy.

Once your body adjusts to eating whole, unprocessed foods, cravings for sugary foods could become infrequent.

### **Sets a good example**

In addition to improving your own health and well-being, eating real food can help the people you care about stay healthy.

Leading by example could encourage your friends and family to adopt a nutrient-dense eating pattern. It's also a good way to help your kids learn about good nutrition.

### **Gets the focus off dieting**

A dieting mentality may be harmful because it limits your focus to your weight.

In fact, good nutrition is about much more than losing weight. It's also about having enough energy and feeling healthy.

Focusing on eating balanced meals rich in fruits and vegetable instead of dieting can be a much more sustainable and enjoyable way to live. Instead of having weight loss be the focus, let weight loss come as a natural side effect of a nutrient-dense diet and improved metabolic health.

### **Helps support local farmers**

Purchasing produce, meat, and dairy from farmers markets supports the people who grow food in your community.

In addition, local farms often provide fresher and less processed food than supermarkets.

### **Delicious**

On top of everything else, real food tastes delicious.

The amazing flavor of fresh, unprocessed food is undeniable.

Once your taste buds have adjusted to real food, processed junk food simply can't compare.