

# List of Processed Foods to Avoid

| Type of processed food  | Why avoid                                                                                                                          | Healthier option                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sugary cereals       | High sugar content and low nutritional value contribute to energy crashes and weight gain.                                         | Choose whole grain cereals with minimal added sugars and higher fiber content for sustained energy.                   |
| 2. Processed meat       | Linked to increased risk of heart disease, cancer, and other health issues due to high levels of saturated fats and preservatives. | Opt for lean proteins like grilled chicken, fish, or plant-based alternatives.                                        |
| 3. Packaged snacks      | Often high in unhealthy fats, sugars, and sodium, leading to weight gain and poor heart health.                                    | Snack on fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, or homemade trail mix for nutrient-rich alternatives.                        |
| 4. Sugary beverages     | Provide empty calories and spike blood sugar levels, contributing to obesity and diabetes.                                         | Drink water, herbal teas, or sparkling water with a splash of citrus for hydration without added sugars.              |
| 5. Fast food items      | High in saturated fats, sodium, and calories, leading to weight gain and increased risk of chronic diseases.                       | Prepare homemade meals using whole ingredients to control portion sizes and nutrient content.                         |
| 6. Frozen dinners       | Convenience meals often loaded with sodium, preservatives, and artificial ingredients, lacking in nutritional value.               | Cook meals in batches and freeze portions for quick, homemade alternatives without added chemicals.                   |
| 7. Microwaveable meals  | Typically high in sodium and unhealthy fats, contributing to high blood pressure and heart disease.                                | Choose meals made with whole, natural ingredients and limit microwave use to preserve nutrients.                      |
| 8. Sweetened yogurts    | Flavored yogurts contain added sugars, contributing to tooth decay and weight gain.                                                | Select plain yogurt and add fresh fruit or a drizzle of honey for sweetness without the added sugars.                 |
| 9. Packaged baked goods | Loaded with refined grains and sugars, leading to blood sugar spikes and cravings.                                                 | Bake homemade treats using whole grain flours and natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup.                       |
| 10. Processed cheese    | High in saturated fats and sodium, increasing the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.                                   | Opt for natural cheeses in moderation, such as feta or mozzarella, and pair with whole grain crackers or fresh fruit. |