

Processed vs Ultra-Processed

Let's compare these two frequently used terms to describe foods served in schools!

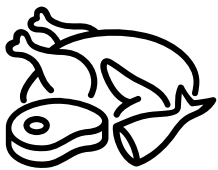
But first, what is “unprocessed”?

Before discussing the difference between *processed* and *ultra-processed* foods, let's touch on the definition of an *unprocessed* food.

Unprocessed foods are those that are still in their whole form, or most raw state, at the time of purchase/harvest. Unprocessed foods have their naturally occurring nutrients (fiber, protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals) intact. Examples include:



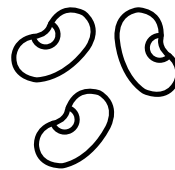
Whole Fruits and Vegetables



Fresh Meat and Fish



Unaltered/Raw Grains



Legumes and Beans



Nuts and Seeds

What is the difference?

It is important to recognize the difference between *processed* and *ultra-processed* foods, because one type is generally fine to consume or even good for you, whereas excessive intake of the other may lead to greater health risks.

Processed Foods

Definition: Any food that has been changed from its raw, natural state. *Minimally* processed foods may be fresh and contain zero additives.

Examples: Washing, cutting, cooking, freezing, drying, packaging, etc. (Baby carrots, shelled nuts, broccoli florets, etc.)

Not likely to pose health risks.

VS

Ultra-Processed Foods

Definition: Foods that have been heavily altered through industrial processing and contain numerous additives.

Examples: Often high in sugar, salt, unhealthy fats, artificial colors, flavors, and preservatives. (Chips, cookies, candy, pastries, etc.)

More likely to pose health risks.