

Wellness: Easy, Cheap, and Deadly Delicious

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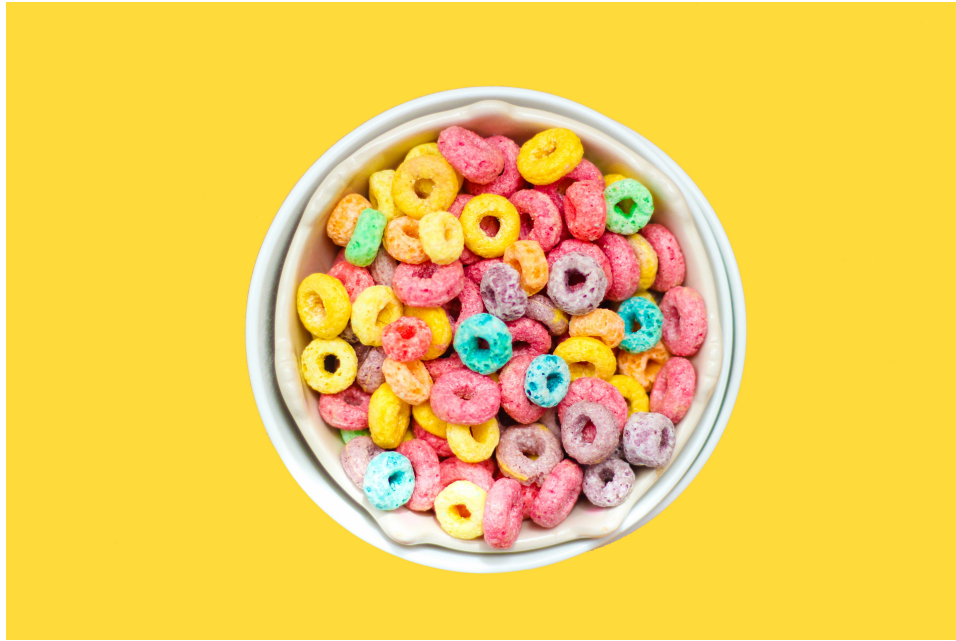


from *Matthew Little*
Epoch Health Senior Editor

Dear Reader,

Happy Friday! We treasure your support. To show our appreciation, we've created an exclusive subscriber-only "Wellness Weekly" newsletter, just for you.

Each Friday, it will replace our regular "Rise and Shine" newsletter with a deeper, more personal perspective on health and wellness. We want this new effort to support your most pressing needs, so please tell us what health issues are on your mind.



You can almost forgive Big Food for the epidemic of obesity and chronic disease they've been feeding us for decades. As addictive as those delicious combinations of salt, fat, and sugar are for us, they are also irresistible for food makers. Cheap, tasty ingredients with fantastic shelf life are hard to come by. Add in a few preservatives, some [stabilizers](#), [thickeners](#), [coloring](#) agents and you've got meals of mass seduction.

But as our reporter David Chu [details](#), the research linking ultra-processed foods to death and disease is as close as dietary science gets to irrefutable, even if specific findings may be up for debate.

A study published in *British Medical Journal* in 2019 followed 19,899 participants for up to 15 years and found just one serving of ultra-processed foods a day increased their chance of death by 18 percent over that time period.

High in calories, low in nutrients, these foods are major contributors to obesity, cancer, diabetes, and heart disease—mass killers of our age.

Obesity doesn't weigh just down the body either—it [weighs down the spirit](#). As reporter Heather Frank summarized, researchers in Austria found that obesity raises our risk of mental illness, possibly due to chronic inflammation associated with adipose tissue (fat).

And yet, despite all the problems from processed foods there is a profound comfort in the simple fact that we don't have to eat them. The diseases and depression they nourish needn't be purchased. You require no special diet to join some of the healthiest people in America—simply avoid these industrial food-like products.

It's a subtle but profound rebellion.

After all, these foods are pushed on you from every corner. They flash themselves from gauche billboards and bright signs and beckon in the checkout lane after you've run the gauntlet of the grocery store. They sit like landmines in your cupboard, promising a quick hit when you are too tired to cook and just want something tasty to take the edge off your day.

Resisting processed foods isn't just a dietary deed, it's an act of soul strengthening self love. It's something you can teach your children, share with friends, and encourage in your community.

You might balk at the cost of [broccoli](#) but that isn't just a meal. That's your body and your mind. You're made from the molecules you eat, and that seemingly simple vegetable is a biochemical miracle of impossible complexity with a symphony of synergistic compounds.

That time you spend cooking is time to unwind, to listen to a podcast on personal finances, or chit chat with your spouse. And the meal you bring to your family isn't measured only by the compliments they deliver, but by the diseases they avoid and the extra pounds they never have to carry.

[The time and money you invest in wholesome food isn't lost](#), it carries on in every cell of your body, in your closest relationships, and in the nourishing [traditions](#) you help revitalize in this world.

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Matthew Little

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We may feature an excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.

EPOCH HEALTH



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