

Medical Centre of Conyers

Foods to Avoid



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These foods pack on the pounds, zap energy, trigger inflammation and crowd out the more nutritious foods in your diet. Do your best to banish these unhealthy foods from your diet—or eat them on rare occasions only.

Stick Margarine

Most brands of stick margarine are loaded with trans-fat — the toxic fat that increases bad cholesterol, lowers good cholesterol, promotes clotting, and damages blood vessels. And, at 100 calories per tablespoon, this heartbreaker isn't doing your waistline any good, either. As an alternative to stick margarine, you might use a "soft tub" variety of one of the reduced-calorie, trans-fat-free brands. Or, if you prefer the taste of butter, use a small amount of whipped butter sold in tubs (more air means less fat and calories).

Soda

One hundred percent of the calories in regular soda come from sugar or high-fructose corn syrup. In fact, these empty liquid calories are largely responsible for fueling our nation's obesity epidemic. Drinking soda also damages your teeth and promotes cavity formation — and some studies show cola may weaken your bones. Instead of guzzling soft drinks to quench your thirst, try good old-fashioned water or naturally flavored seltzers (which have the same bubbly pop as soda!).

Whole Milk

Whole milk is loaded with saturated fat, the type of fat that raises bad cholesterol levels, promotes inflammation, and may contribute to clogged arteries. Thanks to the extra fat, it's also higher in calories than lower-fat milk. Do your heart and waistline a favor and switch to skim (fat-free) or one-percent low-fat milk. It's one of the easiest changes you can make for a healthier diet.

Bagels

Starchy white bagels— and flavored varieties like onion, garlic, poppy seed, and "everything" bagels— are made with refined wheat flour, which has been stripped of the fiber and nutrients that give whole grains their health benefits. Bagels are incredibly dense, which means they're also incredibly caloric. In fact, the standard bagel is the caloric equivalent of four to five slices of junky white bread. Instead try whole-grain English muffins, bread, or sandwich thins, which offer a more appropriate portion of starch for one meal. For times when nothing but a real bagel will do, though, go for whole wheat or oat bran (fortunately, many stores now carry them), scoop out some of the bread filling on the inside, and top it with a thin spread of light cream cheese, or nut butter.

Breakfast Toaster Pastries

Toaster pastries are one of the absolute worst breakfasts you could choose to start your day. They're made with white flour and tons of added sugars. A two-pack of toaster pastries can flood your system with almost ten teaspoons of sugar! That's a surefire recipe for soaring sky-high blood sugars followed by a mid-morning energy crash. If you're looking for a convenient, healthy replacement, try a mini whole-wheat pita pocket spread with a thin layer of peanut butter and stuffed with sliced bananas or strawberries.

Hot Dogs

Up to 80 percent of the calories in regular hot dogs come from fat, and much of it is the unhealthy saturated type. Regularly eating processed meats like hot dogs has been linked to increased risk of heart disease and colon cancer. Swap out your hot dogs for lean chicken or turkey sausages—you get far less fat and more high-quality protein.

Movie-Theater Popcorn

Most theaters pop their kernels in exorbitant quantities of coconut oil, which is more than 90 percent saturated fat, and portions are absolutely out of control! A medium size can be piled high with up to 20 cups of greasy popcorn, which will cost you 1,200 calories and 60 grams of saturated fat before you even factor in the buttery topping they automatically squirt on top of your tub. That's the caloric equivalent of three large fast-food burgers, and the saturated fat equivalent of a full stick of butter! Ordering popcorn at theaters is a habit you definitely want to break. Instead, get your fix when you're having movie night at home, and enjoy low-calorie air-popped or light microwave popcorn for just 30 calories per cup.

Deep-Dish Pizza

The hallmark of deep-dish pizza is its thick, dense crust. Add in the fattening, whole-milk cheese and greasy meat toppings like sausage, pepperoni, and bacon, and a two-slice serving could shock your system with about 1,300 calories and 24 grams of saturated fat. The good news is, you don't have to swear off pizza completely: Order your pie with thin crust to cut out surplus starch, skip the meat toppers, and instead load on veggies like peppers, onions, mushrooms, and broccoli, which help fill you up and add a blast of nutrition.

Frappuccino

This one pretty much goes without saying, but if you still need some convincing, how about we share just how many calories and grams of fat are in one Grande? One regular mocha frap has 400 calories, 16 grams of fat and 60 grams of sugar! That is three times the amount of sugar in a Snickers bar. If you can't live without your daily Starbucks, opt for a Grande nonfat mocha to save more than 200 calories and 10 grams of fat.

Store bought pasta sauces

This may be a hard habit to break! However, just take a glance at the nutrition label of your favorite sauce before you throw it into your cart. One-half cup of pre-made sauce has more than 10 grams of sugar and more than 500 milligrams of sodium. Skip the super sweet sauce and make your own! There are many recipes to be found online.

Fast food muffins

They may appear healthy, but they are NOT. One regular-sized muffin from Dunkin Donuts has more than 600 calories, 25 grams of fat, 54 grams of sugar and more than 90 grams of carbohydrates. To give you some perspective, that is the equivalent of three regular-sized glazed donuts. Leave the bakery counter behind and make your own muffins!

Microwavable "diet" meals

Beware of those frozen dinners that claim to be "healthy" or "low-fat," because they are often far from that. Many of the dishes that are lower in fat are loaded with preservatives, calories, sugar and sodium.

Conventional apples

Apples don't develop resistance to pesticides because of how they are grafted when they are grown. Avoid getting sick and buy only organic apples. If you can't afford that, be sure to peel and wash them before eating.

Canned soup

Sodium, salt, is one of the major ingredients in canned soup. You can end up consuming 73 percent of your days' worth of sodium in just one meal by eating an entire can. Skip the saltwater and make your own soup at home.

Corn-fed beef

We know it's cheaper to buy corn-fed versus grass-fed, but the nutritional difference between the two is like night and day. Grass-fed beef is higher in beta-carotene, vitamin E, omega-3s, calcium, magnesium and potassium. It's also lower in saturated fats that often cause heart attacks and coronary disease.

Pre-Made Icing

The cookie and cake icing that comes in tubs is loaded with sugar, and many brands contain dangerous trans-fats. Consuming trans-fats increases your risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke by raising your LDL cholesterol levels.

Kids' Cereal

A cup of kids' cereal can have more sugar in it than three chocolate chip cookies. Instead of sugary cereals, opt for wheat bran, oatmeal or another unsweetened cereal and then add chopped fruit for flavor.

Frosted Donuts

Most donuts, particularly the frosted ones, are bad for both your health and your figure. A single doughnut can contain trans-fats, loads of sugar and refined flour, as well as between 10 and 20 grams of fat. Eat fruit, whole-grain toast with honey or whole-wheat bagels with jam instead.

Instant Noodles

A serving of instant noodles might look tasty, but it's high in sodium and carbohydrates without many vitamins or minerals. Instant noodles typically contain flavor enhancers, artificial dyes, preservatives, and other artificial ingredients. Consuming too much sodium can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney damage and other health problems. Buy whole-wheat noodles and make homemade soup instead.

Potato Chips

In addition to being high in fat and sodium, many potato chips contain cancer-causing carcinogens from high baking and frying temperatures. Replace potato chips with dehydrated vegetable chips so you don't have to give up crunchy treats.

Shortening

The AHA warns that shortening typically contains disease-causing trans-fats. Buying vegetable shortening doesn't eliminate the risks; it's best for your health to use olive oil or another fat in lieu of shortening.

Frozen Dinners

Most frozen dinners contain more than half of the daily value for sodium, and that's just part of the problem with prepackaged meals. Frozen dinners are typically loaded with artificial ingredients and lack vitamins and minerals that your body needs.

Processed Meats

Eating sausage, deli meat, bacon and other processed meats could increase your risk for heart disease by more than 40 percent and your risk for Type 2 diabetes by nearly 20 percent. Their high sodium and preservative content is partially to blame for the health concerns. Skip the processed meat and opt for fish, a cut of lean red meat or poultry to improve your diet.

Pancakes from Pancake Mix

Americans love their pancakes, but you might be surprised by what's in your boxed pancake mix. Pancake mix from a box seems harmless enough, so much so that you might not even realize that it contains trans-fats because it's a powder. If you read the label, most pancake mixes contain partially hydrogenated soybean or cottonseed oil. Cooking from scratch is cheaper and you will know exactly what is in those pancakes you are making for your family. It's just as easy as the boxed mix and much healthier.

Artificial sweeteners

Artificial sweeteners inhibit your body's natural ability to know when it has consumed too many calories so you will, more than likely, overeat. These chemical sweeteners also seem to make your body crave even more sweets! Studies show that drinking diet soda more than doubles your risk for obesity! For those with diabetes, aspartame actually worsens their insulin sensitivity even more so than sugar does. Those who consume large amounts of artificial sweeteners usually have some type of kidney malfunction as well.

Packaged Sandwiches

When you are in a rush for lunch you might think that picking up a premade sandwich is a healthier choice than fast food, but you would be making a mistake about that. Although convenient, prepackaged sandwiches are neither worth the money nor the health problems. An average sandwich has more than 400 calories in the sandwich alone. Many of them can make you exceed your daily fat and salt intake in just that one meal. Most prepackaged sandwiches come with at least 4 tablespoons of mayo. Most sandwiches use the unhealthiest type of meat you can possibly use, such as bologna or salami. Think of your health and make your own sandwiches at home and use Boar's Head lunch meat.

Coleslaw

True, it contains cabbage and carrots, both of which are very good for you, but it is simply loaded with calories, sugars, and a tremendous amount of fat. The fat comes from the mayonnaise and some chain brands have even more fat in a serving of their coleslaw (22 grams) than a large serving of French fries! (19 grams.) Take a look at the nutritional info all fast food joints post. Your best option here, if you love coleslaw, is to make it yourself at home with low fat mayo or yogurt instead.

Packaged Cookies

This is another no brainer. Cookies aren't healthy, that's common knowledge. Check the label to see if they are made with partially hydrogenated cooking oil. If they are, put them back. If you read the label carefully, you will see that they contain white flour, tons of sugar, artificial flavors, colors, and simply tons of preservatives.

Salty Snacks

The problem with salty snacks is - the more you eat, the more you want, so the more you will eat. Besides the high salt content, almost all salty snacks are fried with partially hydrogenated oils which make them loaded with trans-fats. Extremely salty foods reduce the ability of your blood vessels to widen, and within 30 minutes this can occur, raising your blood pressure. Read the labels and you will also find that these foods usually use artificial flavors, seasonings, and colors to make them more appealing. The damage that is being done to your heart and arteries is definitely NOT so appealing, however.

Ketchup

The second biggest ingredient in ketchup is high fructose corn syrup (sugar). Some labels even state that their ketchup has two different kinds of sugar! Combining sugar and fats (ketchup on your fries) is a dangerous combination as far as your health is concerned. Also, the ketchup is usually listed as being from concentrate, which means it's been heated and boiled down. This removes many of the nutrients that would give it any health benefits. Many brands of ketchup also contain excessive sodium levels, artificial colors, and artificial flavors, as well as a ton of preservatives. If you love ketchup, look for ketchup that has little or no added sugars and keep your consumption to a minimum.

Ranch Dressing

Ranch dressing does taste great, but it's not so great for your health. Each tablespoon has more than 75 calories. What most people would consider a "normal" serving, at least one ounce, has 137 calories and more than 7 grams of fat! Most people eat approximately 100 grams on an average salad. 100 grams is almost 500 calories! Sure turns that diet salad into a whole other monster, especially when you consider a Big Mac from McDonald's has about 525 calories. Ranch dressing is also loaded with sugar, modified food starch, artificial flavors, artificial colors, and malt dextrin, all things you don't need in your body. Ranch dressing may taste good but it's not worth damaging your health or ruining your diet. Use a homemade option if you simply can't resist.

Packaged Diet Snacks

We're talking about those popular little 100 calorie "diet" snack packs which are so appealing because you figure you won't overeat if you eat just one of these little packages Think about it: a piece of fruit is also only 100 calories. In order make these snacks tasty they frequently contain unnamed artificial sweeteners, or plain old sugar. Choose a piece of fresh, organic fruit instead. You will be much more satisfied and your body will appreciate it.

Anything from fast food chains

Everyone knows fast food is not healthy, yet we just can't leave it alone. That's probably because of all the added trans- fats, salt, chemicals like MSG, and sugars that are added to the food to make it taste so good. Let's not forget about portion size, either. A large serving of French fries from McDonald's has 4 days' worth of trans-fat all by itself. All fast food is loaded with everything bad you want to avoid trans-fats, commercialized beef, food dyes, artificial sweeteners, sugar, excessive salt, and many, many others.