

ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS & THE MICROBIOME

WHAT WE EAT MATTERS – TO OUR MICROBIOME AND OUR HEALTH

Ultra-processed foods (UPFs) can disrupt the balance and diversity of gut microbes, leading to inflammation and an increased risk of chronic disease.

1. WHAT ARE ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS?

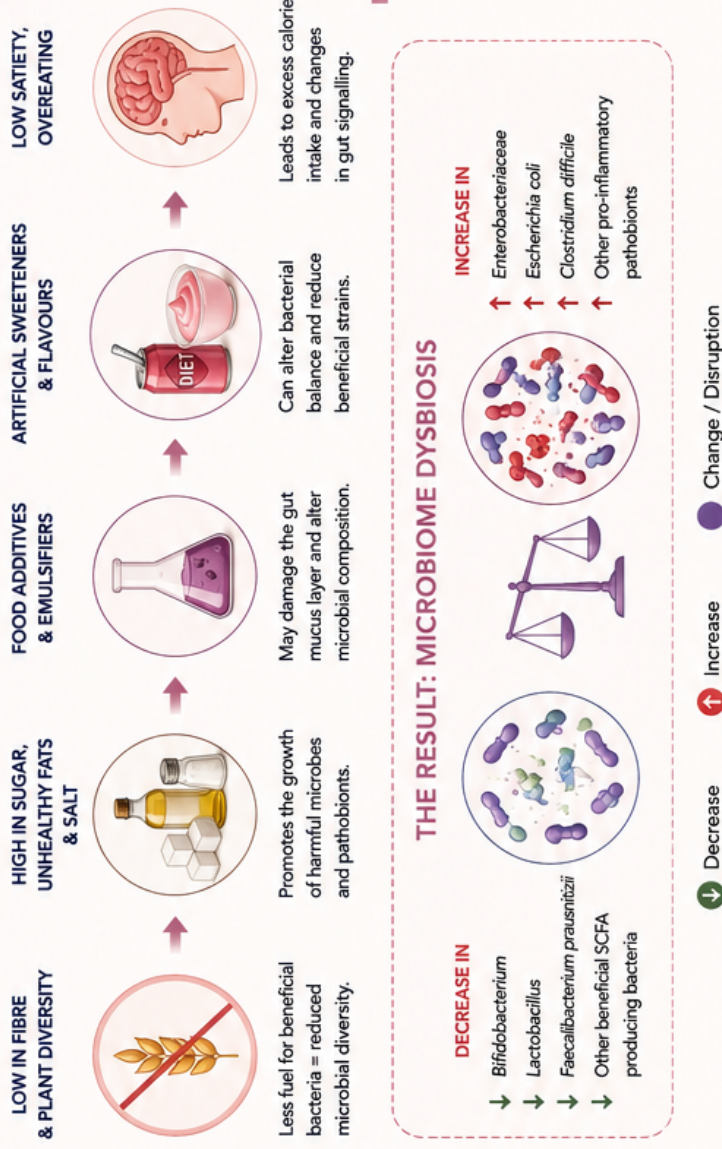
Industrial formulations made mostly or entirely from substances extracted from foods or synthesized in labs.



COMMON EXAMPLES

- ✓ Packaged snacks, biscuits, sweets
- ✓ Sugary drinks and energy drinks
- ✓ Fast food, frozen ready meals
- ✓ Processed meats (e.g. sausages, nuggets)
- ✓ Breakfast cereals, instant noodles
- ✓ Flavoured yoghurts, desserts, ice cream

2. HOW ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS DISRUPT THE MICROBIOME



3. IMPACT ON HEALTH



INCREASED INFLAMMATION
Dysbiosis and gut barrier impairment allow toxins to enter the bloodstream, triggering chronic low-grade inflammation.



WEAKENED BARRIER
Additives and dysbiosis can thin the gut mucus layer and tight junctions, increasing intestinal permeability ('leaky gut').



IMMUNE DYSREGULATION
A disrupted microbiome can overactivate the immune system or reduce immune tolerance.



MOOD & MENTAL HEALTH
Changes in gut bacteria can affect neurotransmitters and the gut-brain axis, influencing mood, stress and anxiety.



METABOLIC EFFECTS
Linked to weight gain, insulin resistance, high blood sugar and increased risk of type 2 diabetes and fatty liver.



LONG-TERM DISEASE RISK
Associated with increased risk of IBS, allergies, cardiovascular disease, autoimmune disease and certain cancers.

4. SUPPORT YOUR MICROBIOME: SWAP THIS...

INSTEAD OF Sugary drinks	CHOOSE Water, herbal tea, kombucha	INSTEAD OF Packaged snacks	CHOOSE Whole food snacks (nuts, seeds, fruit)	INSTEAD OF Processed meals	CHOOSE Home-cooked meals	INSTEAD OF Refined grains	CHOOSE Whole grains & legumes	INSTEAD OF Artificial additives & sweeteners	CHOOSE Real food ingredients



FOOD IS INFORMATION FOR YOUR MICROBIOME. Choosing mostly whole, minimally processed foods feeds beneficial microbes, protects your gut barrier and supports long-term health.



Small daily choices.
Big impact on your microbiome.