

Why You Should Read: Sugar Salt Fat

Get in-depth answers to the following questions, and more

Key Takeaways:

1. Avoid added sugar
2. Stop snacking
3. Eat more protein

What is the bliss point?

To understand the bliss point, imagine a graph, with the X-axis being the amount of sugar in a food, and the Y-axis being the enjoyment that the consumer gets from eating the food. As more sugar is added to the food, enjoyment increases, up to a point. After this point, the added sugar decreases enjoyment of the food. The bliss point is the highest point on the graph, a point at which consumers keep eating the food.

Food scientists experiment to find the bliss point during the development of a new processed food. This bliss point can be altered and elevated by the presence of fat and salt, leading to hyper-palatable, addictive food.

Ultra-processed foods have been engineered to be as consumable as possible, at the expense of health.

But salt is good for you, right?

Up to a certain point, salt is an important mineral that enables cellular function and proper hydration.

Most people blast past the point of health on a daily basis, due to the salt in processed foods.

Chronic salt overconsumption can raise blood pressure, leading to hypertension and a higher risk of heart disease.

Salt is an integral part of the processed food industry. In fact, there is no one type of salt. Cargill, one of the world's largest salt distributors, creates custom salt molecules for its customers in the processed food industry.

Salt is used to hide the mechanical, processed taste of many foods. Throughout the text, Micheal Moss repeatedly brings up how the removal of salt transforms food from flavorful to inedible. It is used to enhance the crunch of chips and preserve the freshness and taste of canned soups.

On average, people get ten percent of their daily salt intake from naturally occurring salt in vegetables like spinach. They get another six percent from added salt while cooking or from a salt shaker.

The rest of the salt comes from ultra-processed foods.

Have you heard about the cheese caves?

In the United States, there are caves full of moldy cheese.

In order to keep milk prices acceptably high so that farmers are able to make a living, the government purchases surplus supply, often in the form of cheese.

Before it gets to the government, processed food companies find inventive ways to insert cheese into our diets.

- Cheese stuffed crust pizza
- Triple cheese lasagna
- Cheese-Its
- Chuck E Cheese

These are just a few ways that cheese has gone from a dietary luxury to an omnipresent ingredient.

Cheese is not inherently bad for you. In fact, it can be a good source of protein and fat in moderation.

Overconsumption of cheese, especially cheese as an ingredient, is bad for you. Cheese is high in saturated fat, meaning that the fatty acid chains of the lipid all have single bonds (saturated).

Saturated fat is more difficult to break down than unsaturated fat, but at least the fat in cheese is combined with important nutrients and bacteria that can improve health.

Fat (lipid) is much maligned due to its association with body fat. Good fats, found in eggs, avocados, and nuts are an important part of a nutritionally dense diet. This is why keto can help people lose weight.

Processed foods are made with the cheapest fats available, such as seed oils that lack important nutrients essential for sustaining proper bodily function.

It is difficult for the tongue to detect an overabundance of fats, meaning that it is difficult for the mind to know how much fat it has eaten. Unlike sugar, which has a point at which it is no longer palatable, the upper limit of fat is the amount that is physically possible to put into a product.

The hallmarks of processed “food” is caloric density and nutritional deficiency. They appeal to the primitive mind’s calorie craving without delivering the vitamins and minerals that often came with such energy dense food. Ultra-processed foods have been engineered to be as consumable as possible, at the expense of health.

How is the sausage made?

One of the biggest revelations I learned in Sugar Salt Fat was just how bad processed meat can be.

Most processed meat is made from the cast off pieces of the animal. The best cuts of the cow are sold whole as steaks.

Meat companies combine all of this leftover animal, which can come from different places around the world, and sell it as one whole product.

These countries often have worse industry regulations than the United States, meaning that the cleaning and treatment process of the meat is simply subpar.

This can lead to bacteria, chemicals, and even feces being left in the meat that is sold to the consumer.

Furthermore, processed meats that are sold ready to eat at the grocery store have often undergone the same treatment as the ultra-processed foods discussed above in order to ensure freshness and taste.

However, I hesitate to put processed meats in the same category as ultra-processed foods, if only for the fact that they retain some of their nutritional value. Furthermore, ground meat has to be cooked prior to eating, meaning that consumers can choose the amount of salt, sugar, and fat that ends up in the final meal.

What can you do?

Stop snacking.

Snacking is a product of the processed food industry, created in order to get you to buy more.

Avoid added sugar.

Sugar, especially fructose, is an addictive substance that damages the proper metabolic function of the body when consumed in excess. You can watch the YouTube video below for more information.

Eat more protein.

The majority of people under-eat protein. Ultra-processed foods are often lacking in protein.

Protein is important for feeling satiated after eating a meal. Ultra-processed foods only leave you wanting more.

Sources

Priority Micronutrient Density in Foods

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnut.2022.806566/full>

Sugar: THE BITTER TRUTH

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnniua6-oM>

Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us

Micheal Moss