**'Ultra-processed foods' are to blame for 90% of added sugar and HALF of all calories in the average American's diet, experts warn**

* **Ultra-processed foods are packed with salt, sugar, oils and fats**
* **They also contain substances not usually used in cooking - flavorings, emulsifiers and other additives designed to mimic qualities of 'real food'**
* **Include sweet or savory packaged food, chicken nuggets, reconstituted meat products, instant noodles and soups and soft drinks**
* **Added sugar should only make up 10% of a person's energy intake**
* **Study found added sugar represented 1 in 5 calories in processed food**
* **Excess added sugar increases risk of obesity, diabetes and heart disease**

By [LIZZIE PARRY FOR DAILYMAIL.COM](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Lizzie+Parry+For+Dailymail.com)

**PUBLISHED:** 23:30, 9 March 2016 | **UPDATED:** 00:50, 16 March 2016

'Ultra-processed' foods are to blame for up to 90 per cent of all added sugar, and half the calories in the average American's diet, a new study today revealed.

They are those foods that are packed with salt, sugar, oils and fats.

But, they also include substances not generally used in cooking, such as flavorings, emulsifiers and other additives designed to mimic the qualities of 'real foods'.

Chicken or fish nuggets, sweet or savory packaged snacks, confectionery and desserts, packaged baked goods, reconstituted meat products, instant noodles and soups as well as soft drinks, are all deemed ultra-processed, experts said.

They warn too many Americans are eating a diet rich in these foods, and as a result are consuming far too much added sugar.

The World Health Organization recommended added sugars in a person's diet account for no more than 10 per cent of of their daily energy intake.

But, scientists in Brazil found the typical American is consuming added sugars that account for up to 90 per cent of their daily energy intake.

This in turn, increases the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

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Researchers analyzed the diets of more than 9,000 Americans, from the 2009-10 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

They looked at the average dietary content of added sugars and the proportion of people who consumed more than 10 per cent of their total energy intake - the maximum recommended limit - from this source.

The team from the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil, found ultra-processed foods made up more than half the total calorie intake (just under 60 per cent).

Furthermore, they found they contributed to almost 90 per cent of energy intake from added sugars.

Added sugars represented one in every five calories in the average ultra-processed food product - far higher than the equivalent in unprocessed or minimally processed foods, and processed culinary ingredients, including table sugar, combined.

The researchers noted a strong linear association between the dietary content of ultra-processed foods and the overall dietary intake of added sugars.

In addition, the proportion of people exceeding the recommended upper limit of 10 per cent of energy from added sugars was far higher when ultra-processed food consumption was high.

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And that figure rose to more than 80 per cent among those who ate the most ultra-processed food.

The scientists noted it was only Americans whose ultra-processed food consumption was within the lowest 20 per cent, who had an average daily added sugar intake that fell below the maximum recommended limit.

The World Health Organisation and the American Heart Association are among health bodies that have concluded that excess added sugar intake increases the risk not only of weight gain, but also of obesity and diabetes, which are associated with a heightened risk of cardiovascular disease, and tooth decay.

Study author Professor Carlos Augusto Monteiro, said: 'Cutting back on the consumption of ultra-processed foods could be an effective way of curbing excessive added sugar intake in the US.'

The study was published in the journal BMJ Open

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3484761/Ultra-processed-foods-blame-90-added-sugar-HALF-calories-average-American-s-diet-experts-warn.html#ixzz49fUF8Ruk>   
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