New Study Finds Majority of Our Calories Come from Ultra Processed foods

A study published in the medical journal JAMA has shown that children and adolescents ages 2-19 get most of their calories from ultra-processed foods.

Two-thirds, 67% of calories consumed by this age group in 2018 came from foods like frozen pizza, microwave meals, chips, and sweets. This is a 6% increase from 1999.

> *This widespread reliance on junk food is an increasing public health concern as the obesity rate has been rising steadily among U.S. youths for the past two decades.*
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> *If You Think Kids Are Eating Mostly Junk Food, A New Study Finds You're Right*

Researchers analyzed the diets of 33,795 people. The authors of the study point out one reason this is particularly concerning is due to the fact that adolescents are at a critical age for developing dietary habits that carry into adulthood.

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In this time period that the consumption of processed foods increased the consumption of unprocessed foods decreased to 23.5%.

Ready-to-eat meals increased in consumption from 2.2% to 11.2%, the greatest increase. Packaged sweets increased from 10.6% of calories to 12.9% of calorie consumption.

While the growth in consumption of highly processed foods was higher for black, non-Hispanic youth, researchers found

education level or income level didn’t affect consumption of ultra-processed foods.

On a positive note, the consumption of sugary beverages dropped from 10.8% of overall calories to 5.3% of overall calories. Researchers suggest this could be due to efforts to educate about the effects of sugary drinks on your health.

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