

Eat This, Not That!

TOSS THESE

50 Foods That Can Cause Heart Disease

It's the #1 killer in the U.S., yet you can prevent its sneaky symptoms by ridding your diet of 50 foods.

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According to the American Heart Association, heart disease accounts for one in three deaths in the U.S.—claiming nearly one life every 40 seconds in 2017. What's even more appalling is that fatal heart attack- and stroke-inducing cardiovascular disease is preventable.

So how can you nip your risk for the condition in the bud? The AHA recommends engaging in moderately intense aerobic exercise for at least 150 minutes per week or 75 minutes of intense aerobic activity weekly in addition to moderate- to high-intensity strength training two days a week. But that's not all.

There's one super simple and oft-overlooked way to drastically improve your cholesterol and blood pressure levels almost instantaneously, and that's by revamping your diet. Read on to see which foods you should avoid to keep your heart pumping properly, and then replace these fridge offenders with our 20 Best Foods for Your Heart.

1

Candy



Americans consume a staggering 22 pounds of candy a year. And while most of it is chocolate, we doubt the population is picking the heart-healthy 70 percent dark chocolate bars over a Snickers every time. Whether you're grabbing a lollipop at the doctor's office or popping a handful of M&Ms after lunch, candy is basically straight-up sugar in every shape and form—and can increase fatty deposits, putting you at risk for heart disease. If you find your willpower silenced by your sweet tooth more often than not, put these 30 Easy Ways to Stop Eating So Much Sugar to good use.

2

Potato Chips



It's no secret that potato chips are off limits on any healthy eating plan. They're high in calories, fat, and sodium—and especially hard to quit noshing on after just one serving. A low-sodium diet is essential for a healthy heart, as eating over 2,300 milligrams (equivalent to one full teaspoon) of salt a day can result in high blood pressure—a serious risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Save your heart and skip the crunchy salt-dusted spuds.

3

Pancake Syrup



Most commercial pancake and waffle syrups are made with high fructose corn syrup rather than real maple syrup. According to Harvard Medical School, consuming too much fructose can lead to an increase in blood triglycerides, which increases blood pressure, LDL cholesterol, and taxes your ticker and arteries.

4

Canned Soups



Canned soups may provide a convenient lunch when you're short on time or ingredients, but despite the produce they pack in, they're far from heart-healthy thanks to their high sodium content. Get this: Campbell's Homestyle Light New England Clam Chowder packs in 790 milligrams per cup—that's about a third of the sodium limit the FDA recommends per day!

5

Coffee Creamers



Snoop through the ingredients of that bottle of Coffee-Mate in your fridge or the powdered version in your pantry, and you'll notice mono- and diglycerides and hydrogenated oils on the list. These man-made fatty acids are the worst type of fat because they can increase your harmful LDL cholesterol levels while decreasing your good HDL levels—a double whammy for heart disease. Stick to topping your morning Joe with a humble splash of whole milk.

6

Cake



Leave the apple crumble and devil's food cake on the store shelf where it belongs. Not only do commercially baked cakes contain boatloads of sugar, they also come concocted with partially hydrogenated oils—aka potential sources of trans fat.

7 Soda



Cracking open too many cold ones isn't just adding inches to your waistline, it's also likely preventing your heart from pumping properly. "Drinking soda has serious consequences," **Adam Splaver, MD, clinical cardiologist and co-founder of NanoHealth Associates** warns us in 15 Foods That Tax Your Heart. "Regular soda promotes an insulin spike, which leads to weight gain and can cause a host of metabolic disorders. Beyond the sugars, soda has phosphoric acid which can promote osteoporosis and may be a cancer-causing agent. And the

sugar can lead to inflammation which causes cardiovascular disease."

8 Diet Soda



Think you're doing your body a favor by replacing that can of regular soda with a Diet Coke? Just because sugar-free pops don't contain actual sugar, it doesn't mean it's any better than the real thing. "Artificial sweeteners can lead to the same spike and risk of metabolic disease; a recent study indicated that excessive drinking can counterintuitively lead to weight gain," **Dr. Splaver** says. "Consuming diet soda will tell your pancreas to make more insulin, which will increase your adiposity (fat deposits) and risk of cardiovascular

disease."

9 Pie



Consider this: Marie Callender's Apple Pie contains six grams of saturated fat per serving—which amounts to about half of the American Heart Association's daily recommendation in just one slice. Before placing an elegantly-latticed pie as the centerpiece of your dinner table, keep in mind that the dessert isn't only detrimental to your heart, it's also one of the Worst Foods for Your Brain.

10 White Bread



If you're an avid reader of *Eat This, Not That!*, we're not surprised you've already swapped out that loaf of Wonder bread for fiber-rich Ezekiel. Not only will this switch help you fend off belly fat, it'll also prevent heart disease. Unlike unadulterated whole grains, refined grains (those found in white bread) are stripped of the fiber, minerals, phytochemicals, and healthy fats—all of which promote heart health.