

'Ultra-processed' food may boost weight gain, first randomized controlled trial shows

People eating ultra-processed foods ate more calories and gained more weight than when they ate a minimally processed diet, according to results from a National Institutes of Health study. The difference occurred even though meals provided to the volunteers in both the ultra-processed and minimally processed diets had the same number of calories and macronutrients. The results were published in [*Cell Metabolism*](#).

This small-scale study of 20 adult volunteers, conducted by researchers at the NIH's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), is the first randomized controlled trial examining the effects of ultra-processed foods [containing] ingredients such as hydrogenated oils, high-fructose corn syrup, flavoring agents, and emulsifiers.

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For the study, researchers admitted 20 healthy adult volunteers, 10 male and 10 female, to the [NIH Clinical Center](#) for one continuous month and, in random order for two weeks on each diet, provided them with meals made up of ultra-processed foods or meals of minimally processed foods.

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The ultra-processed and unprocessed meals had the same amounts of calories, sugars, fiber, fat, and carbohydrates, and participants could eat as much or as little as they wanted.

Read full, original article: [NIH study finds heavily processed foods cause overeating and weight gain](#)