

Junk food could interfere with cognitive function, as well as increase obesity and illnesses

Ultra-processed foods have lots of added and unhealthy ingredients, such as sugar, salt, fat, artificial colors and preservatives. Examples include frozen meals, soft drinks, hot dogs and cold cuts, fast food, packaged cookies, cakes and salty snacks.

These foods have been linked to an increased risk of heart disease, metabolic syndrome and obesity.

Now, [scientists in Brazil have tied them to a greater risk of declining brainpower.](#)

The study couldn't prove cause-and-effect. However, "the cognitive decline could be the result of microvascular lesions in the brain, reduced brain volume or even systemic inflammation caused by the consumption of ultra-processed foods," theorized study lead researcher [Natalia Gomes Goncalves.](#)

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"How, one might ask, would eating a cheeseburger and french fries with a soda, munching on fried pork rinds, sharing a bucket of fried chicken, or chowing down a sleeve of commercially made cookies, affect my brain?" said [Dr. Samantha Heller](#), a senior clinical nutritionist at NYU Langone Health in New York City.

When people eat ultra-processed foods on a regular basis, they are unlikely to get the fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that their bodies need to be healthy, fight disease and reduce inflammation, she said.

"Ultimately, this can affect how well our brains work because they need a steady supply of these macro- and micronutrients to function properly. We can't mentally muscle our way through poor nutrition," Heller explained.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)