

# tasty times

important updates for success and more resources from the child care healthy food program



## Dear Child Care Provider,

Processed foods are often considered unhealthy and even dangerous when consumed in large quantities, but why is that the case? This issue of *Tasty Times* will discuss what “processed” really means and provide the truth behind this type of food so you can make better food choices for yourself and the children in your care.

—Lacey Pezley, Dietetic Intern  
(for John R. Gadiant, RD/LDN,  
Supervisor)

## Healthy Food Program Number

For the Out of Home voicemail, payment information or to speak to a customer service representative:



Call:  
**(773)  
564-8861**

Remember, **July** claims are due in our office by **August 5th!**

**Warning! Late claims WILL result in late payment!**

## The Truth About Processed Food

### What does ‘processed’ really mean?

A food that is processed means it has been altered from its natural state in some way. There are many different ways a food can be processed. The most common ways are canning, freezing, refrigeration, and dehydration.

Foods are processed for different reasons: to enhance the safety and shelf life of the food or to provide convenience to the consumer. The extent to which a food is processed is one of the most important factors to consider in determining how good the food is for you. Typically if food is more processed it contains more additives, artificial flavorings, and chemical ingredients.

For example, frozen vegetables are considered processed because they have been altered from their natural state, but frozen vegetables are a wonderful source of vitamins and nutrients, and have very limited amounts of additives. On the other hand, a food the children may love to eat like Hot Pockets are processed to a much greater extent and contain over 50 ingredients including: additives, artificial flavoring, and chemicals.



### Why should you limit the amount of processed foods that you eat?

It is important to remember that most of the food we have available to us is processed,

but this is not always a bad thing. What is important to consider is the more processed a food is, meaning the further away it is from its natural state, the more artificial ingredients it may contain. Additives, artificial flavoring, and chemical ingredients should be limited because most of these are not found naturally and our bodies often don't know how to properly use these ingredients. In some cases, these added ingredients are linked to higher rates of disease such as diabetes, cancer, and obesity. More processed food also means a large portion, and sometimes all of the vitamins, minerals, and fiber will be removed.

### Everything you eat and drink matters!

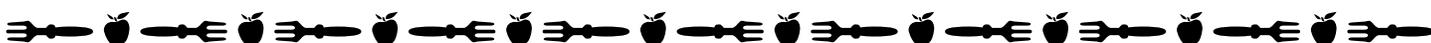
What you eat directly affects your overall health and the way that you feel. In order to feel your best everyday it is important to eat a variety of food.

Food that is heavily processed or contains high amounts of added sugar and fat can make us feel tired. This can lead to decreased physical activity and at risk for poor overall health. Processed food is also very addictive. The more you consume, the more you want to consume.

Focus on making healthy food and beverage choices from all five of the food groups, which include fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy. You will feel full, energized, and satisfied.

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**The Truth About Processed Food** *Continued*

**Unannounced Child Care Home Reviews**

The Illinois State Board of Education will be conducting unannounced child care home reviews during meal times this fall and winter. If you receive a visit, always check for identification and feel free to call us if you are doubtful of the person at your door. You or your assistant cannot ask the ISBE monitor to come back later; you or your assistant must conduct the review. The purpose of the ISBE review is to monitor Illinois Action for Children's Healthy Food Program. ISBE is required to do this for all food programs by the United States Department of Agriculture. Be sure to call us if you are going to be closed or away during a meal time and we will inform the ISBE monitor if he or she is at your door and you do not answer.

**Tips on Submitting Your Menus**

DO NOT bend, fold or staple your menus. Stained menus cannot be processed. It is important to send in your menus flat so that they can be read properly and ensure you do not lose money!

**Welcome New Providers**

- Denise Benton
- Charline Henyard
- Judy Ivy
- Doris Lester
- Florentina Villanueva



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**Limit the amount of processed food you consume by following the FIVE INGREDIENTS OR LESS rule of thumb. If a food product has more than five ingredients it likely contains additives, flavorings, and chemical ingredients that the body is not used to managing.**

Below is an example of a food label with the ingredient list located at the bottom of the label. On your next grocery shopping trip take a look at the ingredient list before adding an item to your cart. Start slow by gradually decreasing the amount of highly processed food you consume and serve.



**Healthier alternatives**

So what can you do to make better food choices for yourself and the children in your care? Consider these "food swaps" and you will likely limit your intake of processed food. The food on the left is highly processed and contains added sugars and fat, try substituting these foods with similar variations on the right to promote a healthy and balanced diet.

**Instead of...**

- *Hot Pockets*
- *Chicken nuggets*
- *Frozen pizza*

**Choose...**

- Stuff vegetables, cheese, and salsa in pita bread or tortilla and heat in the microwave to melt cheese
- Grilled or baked chicken breast
- Homemade pizza dough with tomato sauce, cheese, and vegetable toppings



- *Snack cakes*
- *Fruit snacks*
- *Potato chips*

- Homemade baked goods or fruit
- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Air-popped popcorn, whole grain crackers, nuts
- Water or herbal tea

