

# tasty times

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



## Dear Child Care Provider,

Processed foods are easily available, inexpensive, and convenient; yet they have a bad reputation. Processed foods are often considered unhealthy or even harmful when consumed in large quantities, but many wonder why? This issue of *Tasty Times* will discuss what “processed foods” truly means, hidden truths about processed foods, and what you can do to make healthier food choices for yourself and the children in your care.

—Tran Huynh, UIC Dietetic Intern

## What Are Processed Foods?

“Processed” means the food has been changed from its natural state in some way. Food processing can involve one of many various processes including washing, chopping, pasteurizing, freezing, fermenting, cooking, packaging, adding additives, and many more. A common goal of food processing is to allow fresh foods to become packaged food products. Food processing is divided into two types: chemical process and mechanical process. For example, if apples are peeled, cored, and cooked to make applesauce, it is considered to be mechanically processed. But if sugar and artificial flavors and/or colors are added to the apple sauce, it would be considered chemically processed.

## Food is processed for many reasons:

- Making food edible from its naturally inedible state, like turning grains into bread, pasta, dough, and more.
- Improving safety and extending shelf life by removing harmful microorganisms.
- Enhancing nutritional quality by adding components that were not naturally present, like vitamin D through ‘fortification’ in milk, orange juice, and cereals.
- Convenience for consumers.
- Cost reduction because longer shelf life decreases the amount of waste and overall cost.

## Processed foods should be avoided because they are typically:

- **Higher in added sugar, sodium, and fat.** These ingredients make the products more tasty to consumers which can lead to overeating. High intake of sugar, sodium, and fat are major risk factors for many chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and cancer.
- **Higher in refined carbohydrates and low in nutrients and fiber.** Refined carbohydrates are made from milling whole grains and removing the bran and germ which contain most of the fiber, protein, essential fat, vitamins, and minerals of the grain. Similar to refined grains, many other food products’ nutrients and fiber are lost during processing. Even though some nutrients are added back after processing through a technique called fortification, many original nutrients cannot be restored.
- **Higher in additives, artificial flavorings, and chemical ingredients.** The more chemically processed a food is, the further away it is from its natural state and 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 digest and use these ingredients.

Even though processed foods can be unhealthy, due to their affordability, availability, and convenience, these types of food can still be a part of a healthy diet.

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### Reminder: Unannounced Child Care Home Reviews

The Illinois State Board of Education will be conducting unannounced child care home reviews during meal times this summer and fall. 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.

### Attention Providers! New Change—Reduced Number of Infant Groups

Effective October 1st, 2017, the new CACFP meal pattern went into effect for the Healthy Food Program. As part of these changes, the USDA has reduced the number of infant groups from 3 (0-3 months, 4-7 months, and 8-11 months) to 2 (0-5 months and 6-11 months). Infants 6-11 months are expected to receive foods from all food groups at meals and snacks once the child is developmentally ready to receive them.

It is the expectation that children 8 months and older are developmentally ready to receive all foods. If you have a child that is not developmentally ready or a child whose parents do not believe is developmentally ready at 8 months of age, please notify the Healthy Food Program.

Remember, **June** claims are due **July 5th!**  
**Warning! Late claims WILL result in late payment!**

### Welcome New Providers

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| Sindy Chinchilla | Rufino Marrero |
| Deborah Green    | Lenore Martin  |
| Deborah Hayes    | Monica Roman   |
| Renee Jones      |                |

### What Are Processed Foods? *Continued*

#### Here are some tips for making healthier choices of processed foods:

- Choose food products that are minimally instead of heavily processed. Minimally processed foods include foods that have been washed, peeled, sliced, juiced, frozen, dried, or pasteurized, and often contain only one ingredient. Heavily processed foods are ready-to-eat foods which often contain many ingredients.
- 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.
- Read nutrition labels and keep a check on sugar, fat, and sodium content. You should choose the lowest amount of these ingredients contained among similar items.
- Remove salty liquids or syrup contained in canned vegetables and/or fruits.
- Look for frozen fruit and vegetable products that contain only the produce, rather than added sauces and seasonings.
- Avoid ready-to-eat meals if possible.
- Choose air-popped popcorn, whole grain crackers, and nuts instead of potato chips.



Ultimately, we encourage you to choose fresh and whole foods and avoid heavily processed foods whenever you can. Not only are whole foods more flavorful, they also contain many essential nutrients that cannot be found in processed foods. Understanding what “processed” really means and being able to differentiate types of processed foods will help you become more aware and make healthier choices.



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**Healthy Food Program Number**

Out-of-home voicemail, payment information or to speak to a customer service representative, call:

**(773) 564-8861**

