

Mayo Clinic Minute: Is there a connection between ultraprocessed food and cancer?

There is a growing body of [evidence](#) that shows ultraprocessed foods are not only unhealthy but increase the [risk](#) of cancers. The term ultraprocessed food was created as a way to categorize food, known at the NOVA classification. The system allows experts to better understand the health impact of different food categories.

Mayo Clinic's Dr. Dawn Mussallem talks more about the connection of [ultraprocessed](#) food and cancer.

Video	Audio
	"The average American in the United States consumes at least 63% ultraprocessed foods."
	Dr. Dawn Mussallem says vegetables only account for 12% of the average American diet – and half of those vegetables consumed are processed.
	"We know that ultraprocessed foods are linked directly to premature mortality or deaths."
	And linked to colorectal, ovarian and breast cancer.
Dawn Mussallem, D.O. Integrative Medicine Mayo Clinic	"Studies are showing us is that not only do the ultraprocessed foods increase the risk of cancer, but that after a cancer diagnosis such foods increase the risk of dying."
	What qualifies as ultraprocessed food?
	"Ultraprocessed foods would be things in a package — things like crackers, and pastries and cupcakes and muffins, processed meat."
	They include ingredients you can't bring into your own kitchen, says Dr. Mussallem.
	"With those ultraprocessed foods, you're getting chemicals and additives that likely are very risky for cancer survivors."
	Add plenty of fruits and vegetables to your diet. Eat whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds for optimal health benefits.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Joel Streed.