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Healthy Families for God's mission is to empower and encourage families to be good stewards of their earthly bodies. The Standard American Diet is the #1 source of disease and sickness. Diets don't help us achieve good health either. The only thing that works is God's natural design. When we eat the foods He made the way He meant for us to eat them, we can achieve incredible health and energy to become more productive servants of Christ!

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Ingredients: The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly

Your ultimate grocery-shopping
guide to reading ingredients
labels and keeping your family
healthy

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The Good

When your food choices contain these ingredients, you can be confident that you're making a good choice!

Remember—This isn't a complete list; this is just a guide to get you started!

Butter

Contrary to popular belief, butter is a great source of healthy fats. It provides brain food for growing minds and does not cause heart disease when consumed in moderation.

Unsalted butter is usually fresher than salted, so choose unsalted if you want the freshest. Also choose butter made from cows not treated with growth hormones rBST/rBGH for maximum health.

(Unrefined) Coconut Oil

Like butter, coconut oil got a bad rap when saturated fats were demonized. Unrefined coconut oil (coconut oil that hasn't been treated with bleach and deodorizers) has been shown to strengthen immune systems, speed up metabolism, and provide good fatty acids.

Just be sure to stay away from cheap, hydrogenated, chemically-processed coconut oil like LouAna.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Extra virgin olive oil is a great source of omega 3's and is a superior alternative to vegetable oils. Moderate consumption can even prevent free radicals that cause skin damage and sunburn when used in place of vegetable oils.

It is healthiest when unheated so buy first cold-pressed and use it to make homemade dressings, homemade mayo, etc..

The Ugly

High-fructose corn syrup

Most commonly found in sodas, canned fruit, canned soups, desserts, snacks, beer, etc. but common in almost every packaged food.

Consumption of HFCS linked to pancreatic cancer, one of the most deadly forms of cancer. Also linked to conditions such as gout, Type II diabetes, and obesity.

Usually made from genetically-modified corn which incorporates a whole other group of side effects, including allergies, cancer, and infertility.

Artificial Sweeteners

Aspartame (Equal/NutraSweet), Sucralose (Splenda), Acesulfame-K/Acesulfame-Potassium (Sunett & Sweet One), Neotame, Saccharin (Sugar Twin & Sweet'N Low)

Often hidden in products labeled as "Sugar-Free" or "Reduced Sugar"

Linked to neurological problems including Alzheimer's, seizures, brain tumors, Lou Gherig's/ALS, etc.

Artificial colors

Often listed as red #40, yellow #5, caramel color, etc.

Linked to hyperactivity and emotional problems in children

Artificial flavors

Sometimes labeled as just that, other examples include vanillin (an artificial vanilla flavor), butter flavor, and MSG.

MSG's, "monosodium glutamate," "autolyzed yeast," "yeast extract," "hydrolyzed vegetable protein," "natural flavors", etc.) are all names for a dangerous neurotoxin that immediately kills brain cells..

Linked to migraines, nausea, dizziness, difficulty breathing, heart problems, etc.

Chemical preservatives

Includes sodium benzoate, metabisulfites/sulfur dioxide, BHT, BHA, and other words that are abbreviations or aren't really "words"

Found in a large majority of groceries, including baked goods, golden raisins, sodas, sauces, canned soups, etc.

Sodium benzoate also known to cause hyperactivity; other chemical preservatives proven to be carcinogenic (cancer-causing).

The Ugly

These are the ingredients that we usually consider off-limits almost 100 percent of the time. Of course, there will always be exceptions, but these are bad enough to warrant extreme caution!

Hydrogenated oils/trans fats

This ingredient will be listed as “partially hydrogenated oil” or simply “hydrogenated oil.” It can also be listed as “shortening.”

It is found especially in most peanut butters, margarines, whipped toppings, baked goods like pastries, cookies, breads, and other store bakery items.

Under FDA regulations, “if the serving contains less than 0.5 gram [of trans fat], the content, when declared, shall be expressed as zero.” That means you could eat several cookies, each with 0.4 grams of trans fats, and end up eating several grams of trans fats even though the label would say you had eaten none. Check the list of ingredients, not the nutrition facts.

A 14-year study found that just a 2 percent increase in trans fats elevated a person’s risk of heart disease by 36 percent.

Another study showed a 2% increase in trans fat consumption increased a woman’s chances of infertility by 76 percent.

Olestra

Synthetic fat found in potato chips, esp. those labeled “fat free”

Causes diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and similar symptoms.

Sodium Nitrites/Nitrates

Chemical used to preserve color in processed meats such as bacon, lunchmeat, hotdogs, sausage, pepperoni, Canadian bacon, etc.

Extremely carcinogenic—In fact, the government understands its dangers and has required a vitamin C or E be added to foods containing nitrites as it has been found to slow the formation of cancer from this chemical.

One study found that children who eat more than 12 hot dogs per month have nine times the normal risk of developing childhood leukemia.

Another study found that children who eat hot dogs one or more times per week have a higher risk of developing brain cancer and that children whose mothers ate hot dogs during pregnancy are associated with an excess risk of childhood brain tumors.

The Good

Natural Sweeteners

Includes honey, 100% pure maple syrup, xylitol, stevia, brown rice syrup, molasses, date sugar, and fruit juice/fruit juice concentrate. **Do not feed honey or foods containing honey to babies under 1 year old!**

Raw Milk

When milk is not heated, it contains a crucial digestive enzyme called lactase. This enzyme helps our bodies digest the milk sugar, or lactose, in milk. As a result, lactose-intolerant individuals are usually able to tolerate raw milk.

Fresh, raw milk also contains lactic acid, which prevents bad bacteria from growing in the milk. Pasteurization destroys this natural bacteria fighter, causing milk to breed dangerous bacteria.

Fresh, Frozen & Dried Fruits/Vegetables

Unlike their canned counterparts, fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables are great choices. These are usually single-ingredient foods, which is the best key to eating naturally. *Check the label on frozen and especially dried fruits to make sure they do not contain added sugar.

Eggs

Eggs and items made from eggs are good choices and should not be avoided for fear of cholesterol problems. Cholesterol problems are more a result from sugar and vegetable oils than eggs.

Eggs provide incredibly good nutrition, esp. for pregnant/nursing women and children.

Farm-fresh eggs provide around 4 times the Omega 3’s than store-bought eggs.

Remember: The goal is not to eat foods with a lengthy list of “safe” ingredients on the label—it is to work towards eating foods without labels! And using those items to make things homemade!

Even moderate consumption of these ingredients will cause a person's health to deteriorate. Limit intake of these items as much as possible.

Sugar

While sugar deserves to be put on the "Ugly" list, food manufacturers put it in just about everything sold at the store, making it difficult to get away from. It is worth the effort to get away from it as much as possible. Just a few problems it creates:

Feeds cancer, increases rates of obesity and Type II diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, weakens immune system, causes mineral losses, depression, crankiness, irritability, mind fog, hyperactivity, and high "bad" cholesterol.

It is also four times more addictive than cocaine.

Read labels and especially stay away from items when sugar or any form of it is listed as one of the first four ingredients.

Enriched Flour

All flours begin with whole grains; processing removes the two most valuable nutrients—the bran and the germ. "Enriched" flours are these processed leftovers with some synthetic "nutrients" added back in. Unfortunately, it is lacking in dietary fiber, one of the most essential nutrients for good health and bowel function.

If the label does not say "**whole**" such as "**whole wheat**" or "**whole semolina**", but rather says "**enriched**" or simply "**wheat**", or unbleached, then it is processed grains.

A diet lacking in dietary fiber is the cause behind a multitude of health problems, including constipation, appendicitis, abnormal hormone levels, and eventually colon cancer, just to name a few.

Vegetable Oils

Includes corn, soybean, canola, sunflower, safflower, etc.

Since vegetable oils rose to fame, heart disease has also risen. Vegetable oils cause free radicals that result in inflammation, hardening of the arteries, heart disease, and even sunburn and wrinkles.

Additionally, most vegetable oils are now genetically-modified. Crackers, chips, baked goods, breads, etc. almost always contain vegetable oils. Limit intake as much as possible.

Pasteurized, Homogenized Milk

Milk that is pasteurized has been shown to be more likely to harbor dangerous bacteria than raw milk (see "The Good" page for more info).

Pasteurization is the reason for many people's lactose-intolerance.

Homogenization creates unnaturally small fat globules that enter the blood stream in a dangerous way.

Drinking large amounts of pasteurized milk leads to iron-deficiency anemia and does not prevent osteoporosis or calcium-loss caused by high intake of sugars and sodas.

Most store-bought milks contain added growth hormones, which carry a direct link to breast cancer.

Store-bought milk can also contain various substances from cleaning storage tanks including dangerous acids, etc. as they are not tested for the presence of these things.

Soy

Includes tofu, soybean oil, soy milk, etc.

Found in infant rice cereal, infant formulas, breads and other baked goods, chips, crackers, restaurant foods, and so much more!

Depresses thyroid function, causes heart palpitations, digestive problems, insomnia, panic attacks, etc.

May also contribute to breast cancer, promote kidney stones, uterine fibroids, and weaken the immune system.

These foods top the list of "aging foods"—foods which cause your body's cells to deteriorate over time, causing wrinkles and illness, and eventually leading to disease.