



**Somerset
Council**

What are Ultra-Processed foods?

Find out what ultra-processed foods are, how they affect your health and how you can easily swap them for healthier choices.



What are ultra-processed foods?

Ultra-processed foods, or UPF, are foods which have been changed from their natural state through factory processing. These foods often contain additives to make them convenient, less expensive, and have a long shelf life.

Stages of processing



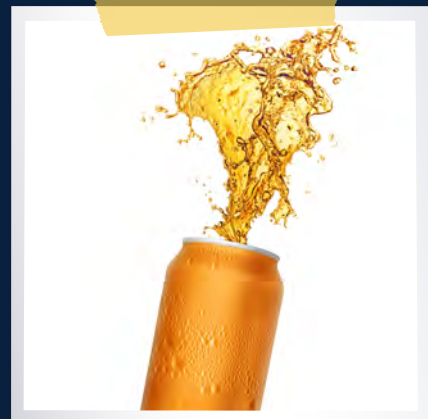
Unprocessed



**Minimally
Processed**



Processed

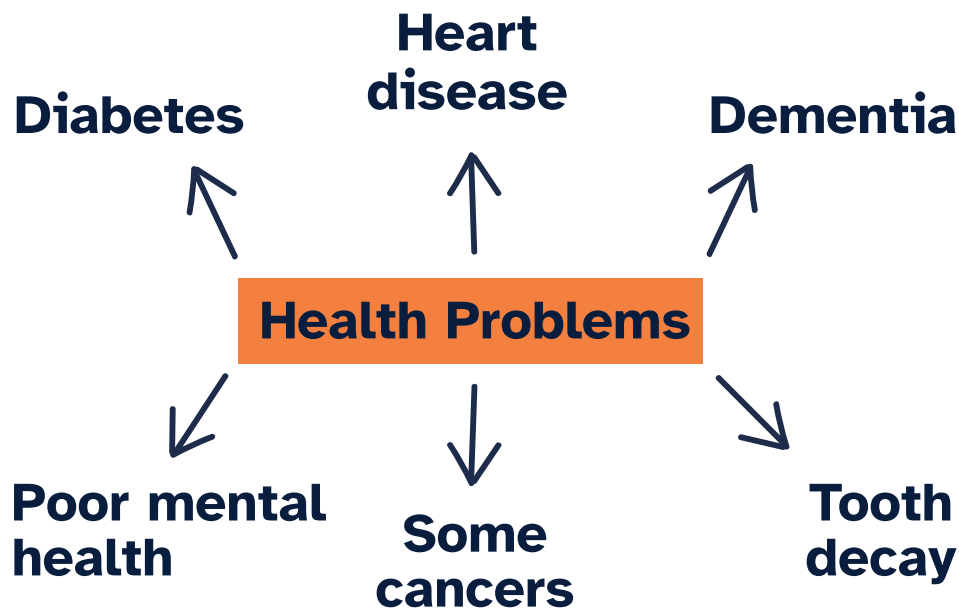


**Ultra-
processed**

Why is this a problem?

UPF are high in energy but do not have the important nutrients our body needs to stay healthy. The more processes a food has gone through, the more the nutrients are lost.

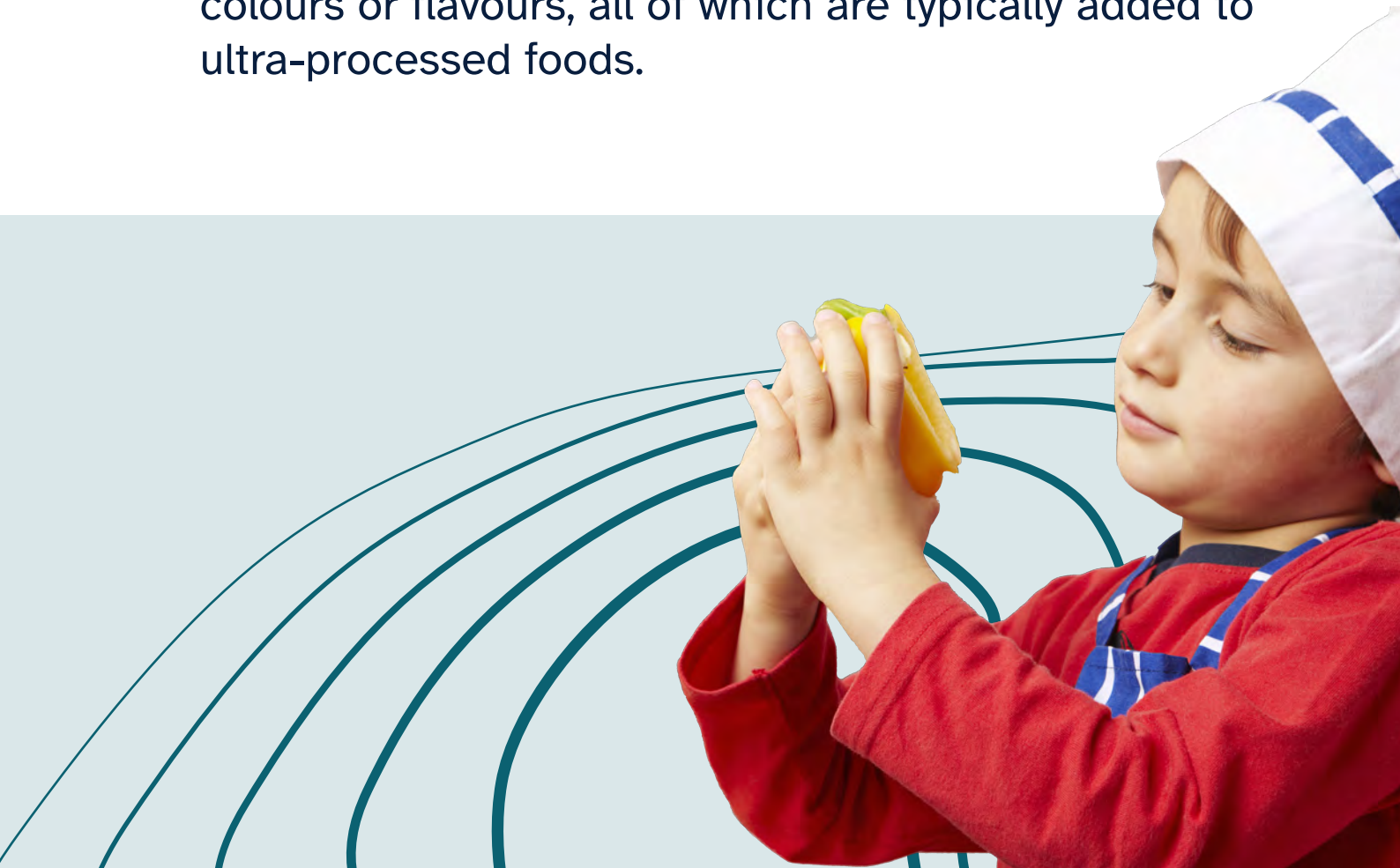
UPF can have high levels of additives, saturated (unhealthy) fat, sugar and salt. These can lead to some of the health problems shown below, in both adults and children.



In the UK, ultra-processed food makes up over half of a typical shopping basket. More than **60%** of the food eaten by children in the UK is ultra-processed.

How to reduce the amount of ultra-processed foods we eat

- Increase the amount of unprocessed food you buy; vegetables, fruits, grains, beans and pulses.
- Get cooking! Take control of the ingredients in each meal.
- Save time by cooking more than you need and freezing the extra portions for another day.
- Recreate your favourite takeaway at home, so you can reduce the salt and sugar content.
- Look at the ingredient lists on foods. You will notice words such as emulsifiers, sweeteners, and artificial colours or flavours, all of which are typically added to ultra-processed foods.



Healthier alternatives:

- Swap sugary cereals to wholegrain breakfast cereals such as shredded wheat or porridge oats with chopped fruit.
- Flavour your meals with herbs and spices, instead of salt.
- Reduce intake of sugary drinks and choose plain water instead.



How to involve your children...

- Play a game of guessing where foods come from. Is it a plant, animal, or factory? This is a fun way to learn more about food.
- Involve them in food preparation and cooking. Be sure to supervise with knives, kettle, the hob or oven. Children will be proud of what they have made!

For more information, please visit:

www.healthysomerset.co.uk



Healthier families: Healthier food swaps - Food facts - Healthier Families - NHS (www.nhs.uk)



British Heart Foundation: Ultra-processed foods: how bad are they for your health? (www.bhf.org.uk)



**Start making
Small Changes
for Healthier
Choices!**

Can you think of one thing you could change this week to eat more fresh and home-cooked foods?