

NUTRITION AND FOOD SCIENCES

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The Dangers of Ultra-Processed Food in the Culinary Medicine Solution: Welcome to the Matrix

Recent data has increasingly implicated the consumption of ultra-processed foods with the development of many chronic disabilities and diseases, particularly those that plague many westernized nations. Currently, in the United States, ultra-processed foods consist of almost 70% of the daily energy derived from the diet. The same is true in many other countries around the globe. One of the characteristics of ultra-processed foods is their disruption and degradation of naturally occurring food matrices. The food matrix plays an essential role in overall health and wellness by directly impacting many physiologic and biological processes related to diet, digestion, and nutrition. However, historical dietary guidance has been focused on the nutrient composition of foods as opposed to first considering the food matrix. Recent studies suggest that over 99% of countries worldwide still use such a nutrient-centric approach in dispensing dietary advice. In fact, only seven countries – four of which are located in South America – specifically address by name ultra-processed foods and their inherent dangers. Recently developed approaches to restoring a positive food-health relationship, like those exemplified in the Culinary Medicine approach, provide potential solutions in addressing the worldwide burden of chronic disability and disease associated with the overconsumption of ultra-processed foods through formulating a matrix then composition approach to evaluating food-health potentials.

Biography:

Michael S. Fenster, MD, better known as Chef Dr. Mike, is one of less than twenty physicians worldwide to hold both culinary and medical degrees and is the only Interventional Cardiologist and Professional Chef to do so. He is also the only cardiologist with joint academic appointments in both the Medical and Culinary Arts. Through his Culinary Medicine university courses, speaking events, articles, books, personal outreach, and television and other media appearances, Chef Dr. Mike has become the voice of Culinary Medicine. His message empowers people to take control of their health, wellness, and happiness through a positive relationship with food.

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