Eating Processed Foods May Raise Your Risk of Autoimmune Diseases

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Here's one more reason to stick with your New Year's resolution to eat healthy: A recent study published in the journal Autoimmunity Reviews suggests that chowing down on ready-made or processed foods might weaken your digestive system and increase your risk for diseases like type 1 diabetes, celiac and multiple sclerosis, Medical News Today reports.

For this study, scientists in Israel and Germany checked how certain additives in processed foods (often used to improve taste, texture, smell and shelf life) affect human intestines. Researchers conducted the study to follow up on previous findings that show several autoimmune diseases might be triggered by a condition called "leaky gut." This occurs when protective cells in the digestive lining sustain damage that allows bacteria and other foreign bodies from food to enter into the bloodstream.

The scientists identified at least seven food additives commonly found in processed foods—including glucose, gluten, sodium, fat solvents, organic acids, nanometric particles and a microbial enzyme used as a food protein—that, according to the researchers, weaken spaces in the digestive lining of the intestines. This can raise the risk of developing autoimmune diseases.

Experts noted that more than 75 percent of the sodium Americans consume comes from processed and restaurant foods, which also include many of these largely unregulated additives. Researchers said they hoped the findings would ultimately help raise awareness about the potential dangers of industrial food additives, as well as show the need for greater control over these substances.

For more information about how a "leaky gut" can hurt your health, click here.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/processed-foods-study-28281-5124