

Kids Intentionally Poisoned by Artificial School Lunches

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

September 06, 2023

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Two Kraft Heinz ready-to-eat prepackaged Lunchables are being added to K-12 school lunch programs across the U.S. this fall
- › Kraft Heinz – which is primarily owned by institutional shareholders, the top four being Berkshire Hathaway, BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street – is a partner of the School Nutrition Association, and has been pushing to get their wares into the lunch program for some time
- › According to Katie Wilson, executive director of the Urban School Food Alliance, the fact that a processed, packaged food meets school lunch standards points to problems with the federal nutritional guidelines
- › Topping my list of concerns for the Lunchables extra cheese pizza product is the presence of soybean oil, which is loaded with harmful omega-6 linoleic acid (LA). Evidence suggests LA is a key contributor to chronic diseases, as it impairs mitochondrial function and energy production
- › “Vital wheat gluten” is another concern. This is pure gluten, which can contribute to or cause leaky gut. Other questionable ingredients include artificial flavors, preservatives, food coloring and “cellulose powder,” which is a fancy name for refined wood pulp. In addition to being an anticaking agent, wood pulp also provides bulk (cutting down on the amount of “real” ingredients required) and can have a laxative effect in sufficient quantity

The quality of school lunches has been deteriorating for decades, and it just got another downgrade. As reported by CNN,¹ two Kraft Heinz ready-to-eat prepackaged Lunchables

are being added to K-12 school lunch programs across the U.S. as of this fall semester.

Improved Nutrition?

The school Lunchables have reportedly been reformulated to meet the National School Lunch Program's (NSLP) nutritional requirements, which include higher grain content and lower sodium, compared to the Lunchables sold in stores.

But if you have even the slightest knowledge about diet and nutrition, you'll realize that NSLP nutritional requirements really don't amount to much. They certainly do not guarantee that your children are being well-fed.

Schools are required to offer students five meal components: fruit, vegetable, protein, grain and milk, and students must take at least three, including a fruit or vegetable option, as part of their lunch.

While that seems sound, once you start looking at what qualifies as fruit, vegetable, protein, grain and milk, you quickly realize that what the kids are actually getting is ultraprocessed junk food loaded with artificial ingredients.

Pizza, for example, has been a staple in schools for a long time, with tomato sauce qualifying as "vegetable." The Lunchables "extra cheesy pizza" isn't even regular pizza. It's basically an ultraprocessed imitation of an ultraprocessed junk food.

Not surprisingly, Kraft Heinz is a partner of the School Nutrition Association, and has reportedly been pushing to get their wares into the lunch program for some time.²

Meanwhile, the Kraft Heinz Company is primarily owned by institutional shareholders.³ As of this writing, the top four owners are Berkshire Hathaway, BlackRock, Vanguard and State Street⁴ — the same entities that have a [monopoly on the world's resources](#) in general.

Balanced Nutrition?

Kraft Heinz has also partnered with Del Monte to provide a Lunchables with Fresh Fruit option, where the processed lunch meat and cheese is served with pieces of fruit (apples, pineapple, grapes or clementines) rather than crackers.

According to [foodsided.com](https://www.foodsided.com),⁵ the fruit-based Lunchables is an effort to create a more "balanced eating school lunch option."

These products are not being rolled out as part of the school lunch program, however. They'll be available in grocery stores across the South-Central region of the U.S. this fall, and are being marketed to children who bring their own lunches.

Lunchables Raise Concern Among Child Nutritionists

According to The Washington Post,⁶ the new Lunchables offerings "could appeal to schools that are struggling with labor shortages in cafeterias and supply chain kinks that have limited their menu options." However, "many nutrition experts greeted the news with a heaping side of skepticism" — as they well should. The Washington Post writes:⁷

"Katie Wilson, the executive director of the Urban School Food Alliance, said the approval of Lunchables points to bigger problems with federal guidelines. 'The fact that a processed, packaged food meets school lunch standards is part of what needs to change in the national school lunch program,' she said ...

Dariusz Mozaffarian, a cardiologist and professor at the Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition, said he wouldn't have a problem with Lunchables — if they didn't include processed meat or high sodium levels.

The World Health Organization considers products such as sandwich meats, hot dogs and bacon to be 'Group 1' carcinogens, the same category as cigarettes and asbestos, he noted ...

'These are products that could be used in an emergency situation, but I certainly hope they don't become the norm in school meals,' Wilson said. 'What

message are we sending our children about healthy eating?’ And then there’s the packaging – plastic trays and wrappers – which some critics say is wasteful.”

Plastic Contamination – Another Pressing Concern

Indeed, each Lunchables product comes in a plastic tray with plastic wrap cover, so just how much plastic trash will be added by serving Lunchables to 30 million students, every day of the school year?

Without getting bogged down in actual math, we can conclude it’s going to be quite a lot, so where’s the environmental concern? Aren’t we eliminating livestock and cutting agriculture to save the planet? Shouldn’t we leave the cows and rice paddies alone and eliminate processed foods wrapped in plastic instead?

Both food and water are becoming increasingly contaminated with these toxic bits. Microplastic particles, which are less than 5 millimeters long, are literally clouding the oceans in spots.

Carried along with the ocean’s currents, swirling gyres of "plastic smog"⁸ now cover about 40% of the world’s ocean surfaces.⁹ Plastic bits are eaten by fish and other marine life, which are then eaten by us.¹⁰

Remarkably, the annual release of plastics to land is estimated to be four to 23 times greater than that released to oceans.¹¹ Eighty-three percent of tap water samples tested worldwide, and 94% of samples in the U.S., are also contaminated with plastic.¹²

Pure Garbage

While media report the content of these Lunchables in terms of the amounts of grains, meat/meat alternatives, saturated fat and sodium in them, most nutritionally-aware people know that there’s more to nutrition than that. Just what is in these products?

Here's the Nutrition Facts label and list of ingredients for the Lunchables Extra Cheesy Pizza (4.2-ounce package) sold in U.S. grocery stores:¹³

Nutrition Facts	
servings per container	
Serving Size	1.0 package
<hr/>	
Amount per serving	
Calories	260
<hr/>	
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 10g	13%
Saturated Fat 5g	26%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 25mg	9 %
Sodium 530mg	23 %
Total Carbohydrate 29g	11 %
Dietary Fiber 2g	7 %
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 3g Added Sugars	6 %
Protein 15g	
<hr/>	
Vitamin D	0 %
Calcium 430mg	35 %
Iron 2.1mg	10 %
Potassium 220mg	4%
<hr/>	
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Ingredients

Pizza Crust (Wheat Flour [Enriched Bleached Wheat Flour (Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamin Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Folic Acid), Whole Wheat Flour], Water, Sugar, Glycerin, Soybean Oil, Contains 2% Or Less Of: Yeast, Vital Wheat Gluten, Mono- & Diglycerides, Salt, Xanthan Gum, Calcium Propionate, Sorbic Acid, Natural And Artificial Flavor, Enzyme), Contains: Wheat; Pizza Sauce (Water, Tomato Paste, Sugar, Contains Less Than 2% Of Food Starch Modified, Garlic Powder, Salt, Onion Powder, Citric Acid, Spice, Xanthan Gum, Sodium Benzoate And Potassium Sorbate [Added As Preservatives], Dried Basil, Natural Flavor); Mozzarella Pasteurized Prepared Cheese Product (Pasteurized Part-Skim Milk, Water, Milk Protein Concentrate, Milk Fat, Contains Less Than 2% Of Salt, Cheese Culture, Sodium Citrate, Sorbic Acid As A Preservative, Enzymes, Cellulose Powder Added To Prevent Caking), Contains: Milk; Pasteurized Prepared Cheese Product (Pasteurized Part-Skim Milk, Water, Milk Protein Concentrate, Milk Fat, Contains Less Than 2% Of The Following: Salt, Cheese Culture, Sodium Citrate, Sorbic Acid As A Preservative, Apocarotenol [Color], Enzymes, Cellulose Powder Added To Prevent Caking).

The school lunch program version comes in a 5.05-ounce container and is formulated to contain 2 ounces of meat/meat alternative, 2 ounces of grains, one-eighth cup of red vegetable (tomato sauce), 7 grams of saturated fat and 700 milligrams of sodium.

Aside from those details, I've not been able to locate a full list of ingredients for the school version, but I believe it's reasonable to assume that most of the individual ingredients will be the same as the grocery store version.

“ Soybean oil is loaded with harmful omega-6 linoleic acid — a key contributor to chronic diseases, as it impairs mitochondrial function and energy production.”

Topping my list of concerns for the "pizza" version is the presence of soybean oil, which is loaded with harmful [omega-6 linoleic acid \(LA\)](#). Evidence suggests LA is a key

contributor to chronic diseases, as it impairs mitochondrial function and energy production.

"Vital wheat gluten" is another concern. This has been described as "normal wheat flour on steroids."¹⁴ It's basically pure gluten, which can contribute to or cause leaky gut. Other questionable ingredients include artificial flavors of unknown constitution, sodium benzoate preservative and food coloring.

It's worth noting that they're not using real mozzarella cheese but rather two kinds of "cheese product." The food coloring (apocarotenal) is a yellow-red compound used to give it a familiar yellowish cheese color.

They also add "cellulose powder" as an anticaking agent, which is a fancy name for refined wood pulp.¹⁵ Bon Appetit! Wood pulp also provides bulk (cutting down on the amount of "real" ingredients required) and can have a laxative effect in sufficient quantity.

Even Worse Garbage

Taking a look at Lunchables Uploaded, which are sold in stores but not part of the school lunch program, provides an even more revolting read. These 15.12 ounce trays come with an artificially-flavored, artificially- and naturally-sweetened drink, a bag of Cheez It and Trolli gummy candy. And Kraft Heinz wants you to think they're concerned with "balanced nutrition."

Here's the complete ingredients list for Lunchables Uploaded Ultimate Deep Dish Pepperoni Pizza with Cheez It & Trolli Candy:¹⁶

"Purified Drinking Water; Pizza Sauce (Water, Tomato Paste, Sugar, Contains Less than 2% of Modified Food Starch, Garlic Powder, Salt, Onion Powder, Spice, Citric Acid, Dried Basil, Sea Salt, Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Sorbate [Added as Preservatives], Xanthan Gum, Natural Flavor)

Pizza Crust: (Enriched Flour [Wheat Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamine Mononitrate, Riboflavin, Folic Acid], Water, Whole Wheat Flour, Soybean Oil, Yeast, Sugar, Contains 2% or Less of: Reduced Sodium Salt Blend [Salt, Potassium Chloride, Natural Flavor], Dough Conditioner [Whey (Milk), L-Cysteine], Vital Wheat Gluten, Natural and Artificial Flavors, Mono-Diglycerides, Sodium Stearoyl Lactylate, Rice Bran Extract, Calcium Propionate, Dough Conditioner [Enriched Wheat Flour (Wheat Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamine Mononitrate), Enzymes], Dehydrated Garlic, Cellulose Powder)

Baked Snack Crackers (Enriched Flour [Wheat Flour, Niacin, Reduced Iron, Thiamin Mononitrate (Vitamin B1), Riboflavin (Vitamin B2), Folic Acid], Vegetable Oil [Soybean and Palm Oil], Cheese Made with Skim Milk [Skim Milk, Whey Protein, Cheese Cultures, Salt, Enzymes, Annatto Extract for Color], Contains Two Percent or Less of Salt, Paprika, Yeast, Paprika Oleoresin for Color, Soy Lecithin)

Gummy Worms: (Corn Syrup, Sugar, Gelatin, Modified Corn Starch, Fumaric Acid, Lactic Acid, Citric Acid, Sodium Citrate, Calcium Lactate, Sodium Lactate, Natural and Artificial Flavors, Titanium Dioxide [Color], Red 40, Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Blue 1)

Cheese Blend (Mozzarella Pasteurized Prepared Cheese Product [Part-Skim Milk, Water, Milk Protein Concentrate, Milkfat, Contains Less than 2% of Salt, Cheese Culture, Sodium Citrate, Sorbic Acid as Preservative, Enzymes, Vitamin A Palmitate, Cellulose Powdered Added to Prevent Caking]

Pasteurized Prepared Cheese Product [Pasteurized Part-Skim Milk, Water, Milk Protein Concentrate, Milkfat, Contains Less than 2% of Salt, Cheese Culture, Sodium Citrate, Sorbic Acid as Preservative, Enzymes, Apocarotenal (Color), Vitamin A Palmitate, Cellulose Powder Added to Prevent Caking])

Pepperoni Made with Pork and Chicken (Pork, Mechanically Separated Chicken, Salt, Contains 2% or Less of Pork Stock, Spices [Including Mustard], Dextrose,

Lactic Acid Starter Culture, Oleoresin of Paprika, Flavoring, Sodium Ascorbate, Sodium Nitrite, BHA, BHT, Citric Acid)

Tropical Punch Artificial Flavored Soft Drink Mix (Sugar, Fructose, Citric Acid, Contains Less than 2% of Ascorbic Acid [Vitamin C], Natural and Artificial Flavor, Acesulfame Potassium and Sucralose [Sweeteners], Calcium Phosphate, Artificial Color, Red 40, Blue 1, BHA [Preserves Freshness])."

Vegetable oils, pure gluten, refined wood pulp, soy, corn syrup, sugar, artificial flavors, artificial colors, nitrites, preservatives and artificial sweeteners – this is what passes for "food" for growing children whose development and IQ depend on proper nutrition. It's beyond sad. And it certainly helps to explain the explosion of chronic diseases in childhood.

Processed Food Diets Are Deadlier Than Smoking

Research has shown refined high-carb diets are as risky as smoking, increasing your risk for lung cancer by as much as 49%,¹⁷ while other estimates suggest processed foods kill more people prematurely than cigarette smoking.¹⁸

Many studies have also demonstrated that the more processed a food is, the worse it is for your health, and more than \$1 trillion is spent on treating junk food-related diseases in the U.S. each year.¹⁹

Processed foods promote a wide variety of chronic health problems, including obesity,²⁰ cardiovascular diseases, Type-2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, depression and cancer.

A 2018 study published in BMJ,²¹ which included 104,980 participants who were followed for an average of five years, found that each 10% increase in ultraprocessed food intake raised the cancer rate by 12%. This works out to nine additional cancer cases per 10,000 people per year. The risk of breast cancer, specifically, went up by 11% for every 10% increase in ultraprocessed food.

Processed foods also raise your risk of premature death,^{22,23,24,25,26} which makes sense, considering how health issues like heart disease and cancer can shave years, if not decades, off your life span.

French research²⁷ published in 2019 found that for each 10% increase in the amount of ultraprocessed food consumed, the risk of premature death rose by 14%. This then also means you have a significant degree of control over your expected life span. Cut your processed food consumption by half and you're already 70% less likely to die early than you were before.

Ultraprocessed Defined

Food processing occurs on a spectrum, with traditionally canned or fermented foods being "processed" but minimally so, whereas ultraprocessed foods have not only been cooked or altered, but also contain unnatural ingredients – such as those found in Lunchables.

Generally, ultraprocessed foods can be defined as food products containing one or more of the following:

- Ingredients that are not traditionally used in cooking
- Unnaturally high amounts of sugar, salt, processed industrial oils and unhealthy fats
- Artificial flavors, colors, chemical sweeteners and other additives that imitate sensorial qualities of unprocessed or minimally processed foods (examples include additives that create textures and pleasing mouth-feel)
- Preservatives and chemicals that impart an unnaturally long shelf-life
- Genetically engineered (GE) ingredients, which in addition to carrying potential health risks also tend to be heavily contaminated with toxic herbicides

As described in the NOVA classification of food processing,²⁸ "A multitude of sequences of processes is used to combine the usually many ingredients and to create the final

product (hence 'ultraprocessed')." Examples include hydrogenation, hydrolysis, extrusion, molding and preprocessing for frying.

Ultraprocessed foods also tend to be far more addictive than other foods, thanks to high amounts of sugar (which has been shown to be more addictive than cocaine²⁹), salt and fat. The processed food industry has also developed "craveability" into an art form. Nothing is left to chance, and by making their foods addictive, manufacturers ensure repeat sales.

Processed Food and the Obesity Epidemic

For a clear illustration of what processed food has done to public health, just look at photos of beachgoers in the 1960s and '70s and compare it to a beach scene of today. Even as recently as my childhood in the 1970s, obesity was uncommon and even older people were relatively trim.

The obesity rate among adults through the 1960s and '70s was only 13%.³⁰ In 2020, the U.S. obesity rate hit 42%,^{31,32} and another 30% of adults were overweight.³³ Combined, that means more than 7 out of 10 people are carrying excess weight, placing them at increased risk for preventable health problems, mental health issues, chronic disease and early death.³⁴

A main culprit behind this obesity epidemic is the omega-6 fat, linoleic acid (LA), which is found most abundantly in seed (commonly referred to as vegetable) oils that processed foods are loaded with.

As the takeover and transformation of our food system ramps up, the problems associated with processed foods will only get more severe, as the globalists' goal is to replace most natural and whole foods with unhealthy patented ultraprocessed products.

Animal farming will be regulated into oblivion in order to be replaced by insect farms (so-called micro livestock), gene-edited food, lab grown meat and synthetic animal-free dairy products – all in the name of safeguarding public health and protecting the environment.

Back in 2016, the World Economic Forum (WEF) published an article titled "What Will We Eat in 2030?"³⁵ The article proposed to improve the food system by increasing food processing and the engineering foods in "ways that are better for our health."

"'Ultraprocessed' foods need not be unhealthy," the WEF claimed. But this is as big a lie as "Roundup is safe enough to drink," "Smoking is safe for pregnant women," "DDT is good for me" and "COVID vaccines are safe and effective." There is no way to make ultraprocessed food healthy. Period. And the sooner people realize this, the sooner we can turn the obesity and childhood disease trends around.

Healthy Eating Habits Start at Home

In my view, eating a diet consisting of 90% whole (ideally organic) food and only 10% or less processed foods is an achievable goal for most that could make a significant difference in your weight and overall health, and that of your children. You simply need to make the commitment and place a high priority on it.

Remember, your children's eating habits are formed at an early age, at home. If they're used to eating healthy whole food at home, they may be less inclined to opt for Lunchables at school, especially if they've been told why one is better than the other.

And, if you're tucking Lunchables into your child's lunch bag out of sheer convenience, please consider the long-term ramifications to your child's health. Review the disease and mortality statistics for processed food diets again. The fact is, eating healthy isn't all that complicated.

Simply focus on whole foods. Your child's lunch could consist of some white rice with a piece of cooked chicken from last night's dinner, for example, along with some fresh fruit and/or vegetable.

Sources and References

- [1, 2 CNN March 14, 2023](#)
- [3 Nasdaq August 3, 2021](#)

- ⁴ Nasdaq KHC Institutional Holdings
- ⁵ Foodsided.com July 30, 2023
- ^{6, 7} Washington Post March 16, 2023
- ⁸ Huffington Post May 24, 2017
- ⁹ The Center for Biological Diversity, Plastics Pollution
- ¹⁰ Daily Mail August 28, 2016
- ¹¹ Science of the Total Environment May 15, 2017; 586: 127-141
- ¹² Orb, Invisibles: The Plastic Inside Us
- ¹³ Stop & Shop Lunchables Extra Cheesy Pizza
- ¹⁴ Happy Herbivore Vital Wheat Gluten
- ¹⁵ Drugs.com Cellulose Powder
- ¹⁶ Amazon Lunchables Uploaded
- ¹⁷ Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention March 2016, DOI: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-15-0765
- ^{18, 34} American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine September-October 2018; 12(5): 375-381
- ¹⁹ Valuing the Impact of Food May 2020, p.2
- ²⁰ Cell Metabolism, 2019; doi: 10.1016/j.cmet.2019.05.008
- ²¹ BMJ 2018; 360:k322
- ^{22, 27} JAMA Internal Medicine February 11, 2019;179(4):490-498
- ²³ BMJ February 14, 2018; 360
- ²⁴ JAMA 2017;317(9):912-924
- ²⁵ BMJ, 2019;365:l1451
- ²⁶ BMJ, 2019;365:l1949
- ²⁸ World.openfoodfacts.org
- ²⁹ Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care. 2013 Jul;16(4):434-9
- ³⁰ American Psychological Association July 2012
- ³¹ Trust for America's Health, State of Obesity 2022
- ^{32, 33} Single Care Obesity Statistics 2022
- ³⁵ Weforum November 10, 2016