



COMMENTARY

Cancer! Roots in our Foods

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There are strong evidences linking consumption of the food products/items to increased incidences of specific cancers in the various organs and body parts of the humans. There are some everyday foods and drinks that are labelled as carcinogenic as these food products/items surely contain some natural toxins, adulterants, artificial colour ants, additives, preservatives, and residues of insecticides or many other unwanted/unavoidable chemicals/ingredients. These foods can cause cancer if taken for long duration and these items are processed meats (i.e. any meat that has been preserved by curing, salting or smoking, or by adding chemical preservatives) sausages, hot dogs, pepperoni, alcoholic beverages, salted fish, burned or heavily barbecued foods, red meat including, mutton, pork, lamb, hot beverages (>65°C), polluted air and water.

Following are the food items containing carcinogenic ingredients:

1. Hydrogenated Oils:

Hydrogenated oils with trans-fats are the worst type of fats. These are known to cause cancer, heart disease, and immune system problems. The coconut, palm and olive oils and organic butter are good for health and are better options.

2. French Fries/Potato Chips:

These fast foods contain acrylamide, pesticide residue, hydrogenated vegetable oil, trans fats, high salt content. These increase the risk of cancers, hypertension as well as other health problems.

3. Microwave Popcorn:

The Microwave Popcorns contain perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and which is a likely carcinogen. The inhalation of vapour of artificial butter present in it which contains dangerous chemicals and can cause lung cancers.

4. Processed Meats:

Packaged and processed meat, hot dogs, sausages, and other processed meats have been shown to be cancer causing foods, increasing the risk of pancreatic cancer. The hotdogs contain sodium nitrite, a cancer causing ingredient which can increase risk of leukemia 700 times.

5. Red Meat:

Red meat increases cancer risks. A sugar molecule, called

Neu5Gc, becomes part of your own cells when it's consumed. Your body then attacks it, resulting in inflammation and a higher cancer risk. There is an increase risk of breast cancer among women who consumed more red meat.

6. Farmed Salmon:

It is often full of cancer causing contaminants such as pesticides, antibiotics, PCBs, and even flame retardants, making it, one of the cancer causing foods. Opt for the wild salmon instead to get the benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids that salmon provides, without contaminants.

7. Refined Sugar/Soda:

Refined sugar is a danger if obtained from genetically modified sugar beets, because it rapidly spikes insulin levels. Fructose, the type of sugar found in soda, is a serious cancer culprit as well. Soda also contains caramel color, a known carcinogen. Soda acidifies the body, which in turn causes cancer cells to multiply. Skip the sodas and limit intake of refined sugars.

8. "Diet" Foods:

If we see the words like "diet", "low-fat", "fat-free", or "sugar-free" in the label in the packaged food items and in the canned and bottled beverages we should be beware that these items are loaded with artificial sweeteners e.g. Saccharin, artificial colors and flavors, dyes and more and these additives and colourants may carcinogenic.

9. Refined White Flour:

Bleached food may contain traces of the chemicals, the highly processed flours also have a high carbohydrate content which upset the blood sugar balance inside our body and leads to a higher production of insulin and thus feeds cancer cells. Avoid carbohydrates that are highly processed such as white bread, white pasta, white rice, soda & concentrated fruit juices to avoid this reaction in your body.

10. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)/Glyphosate:

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) have made their

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way into the majority of our foods. These GMO foods have been modified to withstand heavy doses of a pesticide called glyphosate OR are engineered to contain a toxin that kills bugs. The GMOs foods shown to cause rapid tumour growth and has been linked to Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, birth defects, intestinal discomfort, among other things. The only way to avoid GMOs and pesticides is to choose foods that are certified organic label.

Safe and Healthy Food Items:

1. Food items made up of whole grains, grain flours of wheat, rice, bengal-grams, green-grams, pulses, ragi, oat and many more grains that are locally available.
2. Roasted grains e.g. Bengal-grams
3. Roasted parboiled rice
4. DALIA and KHICHDI recipe
5. Germinated grains e.g. Bengal grams, green-grams
6. Fresh, clean, decontaminated and raw/cooked seasonal vegetables, potatoes, tomatoes, spinach, fenugreek leaves, peas, beat-roots, carrots, coriander leaves and many more vegetables that are locally available
7. Fresh, clean, decontaminated fruits guava, mango, papaya and many more seasonal fruits that are locally available.
8. Fresh prepared fruit juices of orange, mosambi, pomegranate etc.
9. Milk and milk products preferable fresh pasteurized items e.g. curd, whey, paneer
10. Non-vegetable foods e.g. fresh eggs, chicken and fish
11. Dry fruits, peanuts, cashew-nuts
12. Pure country-made fats and vegetable oils from mustard and others locally available seeds
13. Locally cultivated/home-made spices e.g. cumin,

fenugreek seeds, coriander/seeds/powder, ginger, turmeric, chilies, caraway, fennel flower, ajwain etc.

14. Iodized salts
15. Safe drinking water with TDS range 50 to 100
16. THANDAI recipe, shikanji/shikanjbi/shikanjbeen/limun-paani/nimbu
17. Jaggery, CHIKKI, LADDOO recipe

“Better to avoid” food items:

1. Potato chips, potato-snacks e.g. AALOO-CHAAT, AALOO-TIKKI, SAMOSA
2. Noodles of various brands available in the market
3. Tea and coffee
4. Biscuits
5. Besan-Vegetables-Pakoda, PAPAD
6. Breads, pav-bhaji and Rusk
7. Chocolates, toffees

Should not be eaten/taken:

Burger, Chowmein, Pizza, Petties, Pestrries, Momos, PAPE, Cold drinks, fruit drinks, canned, tetra packed drinks, alcohol, beers and other alcoholic beverages.

Few examples of common food items and respective adulterants: 1. Turmeric: coloured saw dust, lead chromate, chalk powder, yellow soap stone powder 2. Chillies powder: Brick powder, salt powder or talc powder.

While eating food items the possible adulterants should be taken care off as these may be or may contain traces of carcinogenic agents and may cause cancers of various body parts.

All above descriptions are based on the regional available food items and variations may be seen on the basis of the geographical regions, cultural preferences, taboos, rituals etc.

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