



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2012 Volume VII: Energy, Environment, and Health

Processed Food for Thought: Exploring Chemical Additives in Processed Foods

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.07.09, published September 2012
by Ann Shioji

Processed foods are increasingly prevalent in our public schools. Whether disguised as baked, light, or fewer calories per package, unhealthy snacks are often a major part of a student's diet. This unit addresses the issues of the chemical additives found in processed foods and scaffolds methods to find healthier alternatives to calorie-dense foods that are low in nutritional value. Diseases linked to obesity such as Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease are on the rise, but these can be prevented with alterations to diet. While processed foods are convenient and appeal to students' tastes, they include several chemical ingredients that are known to cause harmful health effects in humans. The U.S. has institutions in place to regulate the amount of chemicals allowed in our food, but these regulations are less stringent than those of other developed countries, such as Canada and many European nations. This unit encourages students to explore the issues of food processing and marketing, so that they may analyze their own diets more effectively. This will empower students to make well-informed decisions about their nutrition and health, and inspire them to educate others in their community about the benefits of healthier alternatives to processed snacks.

(Developed for Biology/Macromolecules, grades 9-10; recommended for Biology/Macromolecules, grades 9-10)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use