Foods are Gifts from God

How natural is the food we eat?
Eating unprocessed, fresh foods are the source of good health and lowers the risk of disease. However, the food culture has changed to high consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPFs). The Pan American Health Organization describes ultra-processed food and drink products as ready-to-eat or drink formulations based on refined substances with a careful combination of sugar, salt and fat, plus several additives. They include sugary drinks, snacks, and ‘fast foods’.

The table below provides examples of foods in the various processing levels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL OF PROCESSING</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unprocessed and minimally processed</td>
<td>Fresh, Frozen, dried vegetables, fruit, meat, fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed culinary ingredients</td>
<td>Plant oils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processed food products</td>
<td>Canned/bottled vegetables, salted nuts, smoked fish, bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultra processed food products</td>
<td>Chips, burgers, hot dogs, cakes, pastries, most breakfast cereals, sugar sweetened drinks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are processed foods unhealthy?
Highly processed foods are very high in calories, and include an unhealthy amount of salt, sugar, and fats. Harmful additives are hidden using different names that make foods hyper-palatable so that you find it difficult not to over consume them which can lead to weight gain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGULAR NAME</th>
<th>NAME AS IT MAY APPEAR ON INGREDIENTS LIST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>Corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, agave nectar, cane sugar, evaporated cane juice, coconut sugar, dextrose, malt syrup, molasses, or turbinado sugar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Monosodium glutamate or disodium phosphate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservatives</td>
<td>Ascorbic acid, sodium benzoate, potassium sorbate, tocopherols.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours</td>
<td>Artificial FD&amp;C Yellow No. 6 or natural beta-carotene to add yellow hues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

- Paho Nutrient Profile Model
- Harvard T.H. Chan
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Activity One

Video & Discussion
1. Watch the video “Food Systems: Well-being and responsible Consumption”

2. List at least 5 locally grown foods. Over the past 30 years have these foods become more available or less available and if so, why? Or is there no change? Are these foods still a part of people’s diets today?

Activity Two

Survey Time
Complete the following questionnaire as you think about your ability to make changes that can benefit your health and wellness

1. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

2. If someone opposes me, I can find the means and ways to get what I want.

3. I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough.

4. I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.

5. Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations.

6. I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort.

7. I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities.

8. When I am confronted with a problem, I can usually find several solutions.

9. If I am in trouble, I can usually think of a solution.

10. I can usually handle whatever comes my way.

Activity Three

Reading
Read the following website on understanding food labels:

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