



Children's Foods With Cancerous Risks



Most children's snacks at your local grocery store are known by their bright colors, sugar content, or their convenience for an on-the-go snack. Little do you know that most of those snacks and drinks contain cancerous material that can greatly affect your child years down the line. The list below details the most cancerous foods as well as a practical swap for you and your family. Don't know where to start? Feeling overwhelmed by the huge change that this entails? Don't worry about clearing out your cabinets just yet. Small changes, such as water instead of soda, fresh or frozen instead of canned when possible, baked instead of fried, add up.

1. Processed meats (hot dogs, bacon, pepperoni)

- Processed meats contain nitrites/nitrates and compounds from curing/smoking that can form N-nitroso compounds, linked to colorectal cancer in adults.
- **Practical swap:** Lean, grilled or baked unprocessed meats, legumes, or beans.

2. Chips and crisps (potato chips, some crackers)

- High in added sugars → obesity, inflammation and hormonal changes.



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- **Practical swap:** Air-popped popcorn, baked veggie chips, fresh veggies with hummus.

3. Fried foods (fries, deep-fried snacks)

- Frying forms harmful byproducts (e.g., HCAs, PAHs) linked to increased cancer risk.
- **Practical swap:** Bake, grill gently, or air-fry with minimal oil; choose whole-food sides.

4. Microwave popcorn (some bags and flavorings)

- Some bag coatings can transfer PFAS to food; which is linked to adverse health outcomes, including some cancers.
- **Practical swap:** Air-pop or stovetop popcorn.

5. Canned foods (concern about BPA in linings)

- Some linings have BPA, an endocrine-active chemical linked to hormone-related effects.
- **Practical swap:** Fresh/frozen or BPA-free cans.

6. High-fat dairy (full-fat cheese, ice cream)

- Excess calories from high-fat dairy contribute to obesity.
- **Practical Swap:** Smaller portions, lower-fat dairy.

Want to learn more about the dangers of synthetics dyes? Grab a packet under the check-in stand filled with easy-swaps, and fun facts about dyes!

Sources:

American Cancer Society — Acrylamide and Cancer Risk (overview).

IARC/WHO Monograph — Red and Processed Meat (2015). International Agency for Research on Cancer. World Cancer Research Fund — Body Fatness and Cancer Risk

Consumer/health articles summarizing PFAS and microwave popcorn packaging concerns; see public health sources