

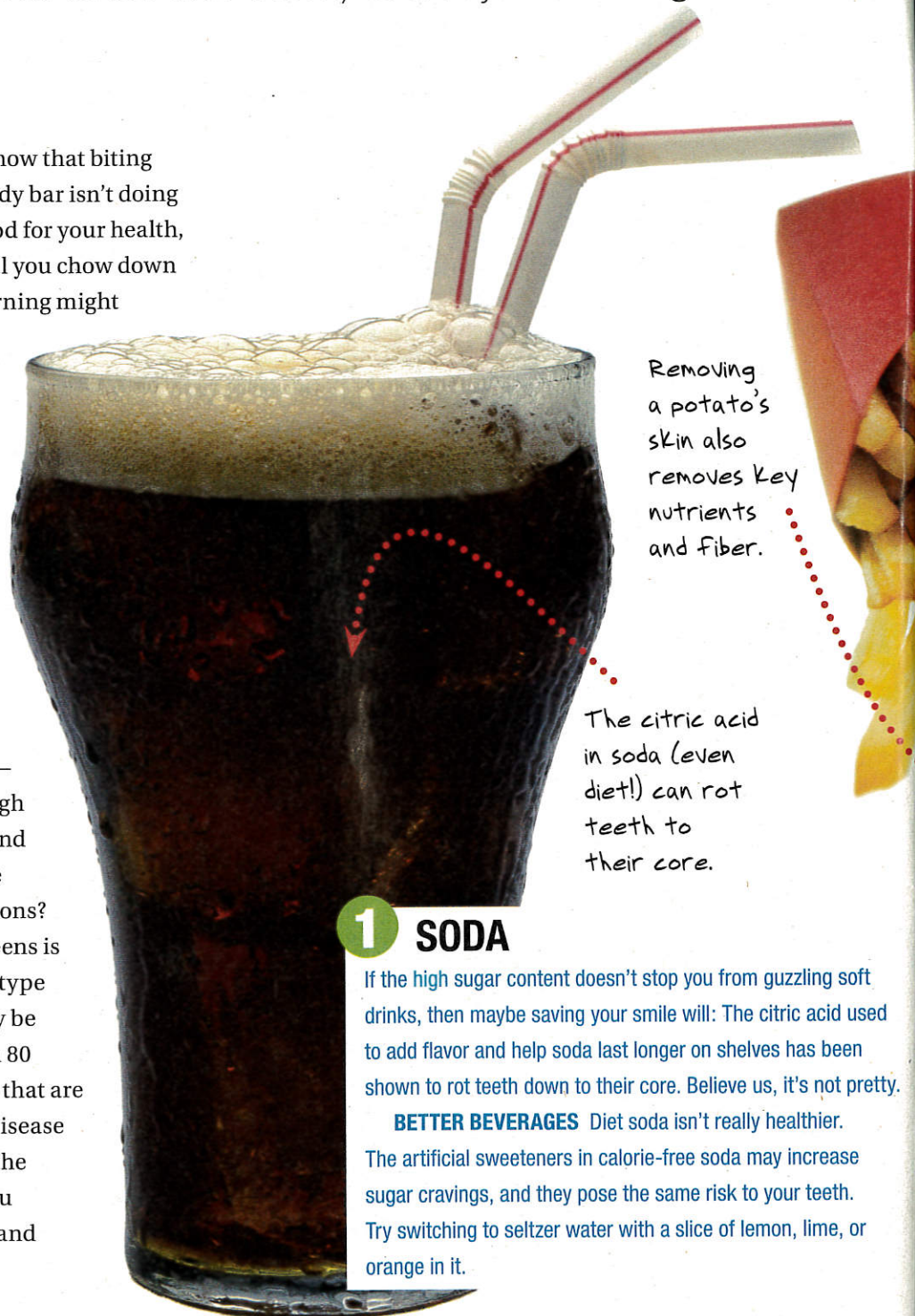
# 10 WORST FOODS

These foods (and ones like them) aren't just lacking in nutrients

**Y**ou already know that biting into that candy bar isn't doing anything good for your health, but the cereal you chow down on every morning might

actually be worse. The fact is that many of the foods teens eat regularly—and some you may even think are good-for-you options—have nutrition labels that are even more terrifying than an episode of *The Walking Dead*.

These foods are full of the three scary S's—sugar, saturated fat, and sodium—which can set you up for high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. Think you're too young for these conditions? Think again. One in four teens is on the verge of developing type 2 diabetes—or may already be diabetic—while more than 80 percent of teens have diets that are setting them up for heart disease later in life. So read on for the lowdown on what foods you should keep off your plate and out of your mouth.



Removing a potato's skin also removes key nutrients and fiber.

The citric acid in soda (even diet!) can rot teeth to their core.

## 1 SODA

If the high sugar content doesn't stop you from guzzling soft drinks, then maybe saving your smile will: The citric acid used to add flavor and help soda last longer on shelves has been shown to rot teeth down to their core. Believe us, it's not pretty.

**BETTER BEVERAGES** Diet soda isn't really healthier.

The artificial sweeteners in calorie-free soda may increase sugar cravings, and they pose the same risk to your teeth. Try switching to seltzer water with a slice of lemon, lime, or orange in it.

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# FOODS FOR TEENS

they may actually be making you sick.

BY RACHEL MORRIS

## 2 FRENCH FRIES

A whopping 25 percent of teens' veggie intake comes from fries, which are super high in fat, sodium, and calories.

**A SWEET DEAL** Try baked sweet potato fries instead, which are high in vitamins A and C. Cut a sweet potato into wedges, season with olive oil and salt, then bake at 400 degrees until tender. Delish!

One can of chicken soup can contain an entire day's worth of sodium.

## 3 CANNED SOUP

Homemade chicken noodle soup is great, but the canned variety has a ton of sodium. What's the problem? Three words: High blood pressure, a condition in which increased force of blood flow stretches artery walls, making the heart work harder.

This tub has as much saturated fat as a stick of butter—and as many calories as four fast-food burgers!

## 4 MOVIE-STYLE POPCORN

When it comes to movie munchies, popcorn bombs. A medium-size bag can feature three days' worth of saturated fat.

**FLICK-FOODS REDO** Our advice: Skip the movie snacking altogether. You can go an hour and a half without eating, right?



## EASY DOES IT!

Relax—it's not like you can never have a doughnut or a cheese puff ever again! Even the worst foods can be eaten in **moderation**. This list is simply meant to guide your daily choices, so that you eat foods that fuel you—rather than harm you—on a regular basis.

You need to eat way too much to feel full!

## 5 WHITE BREAD & RICE

White carbs, like bread, pasta, and rice, are made from refined grains—meaning dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins have been removed. And what's wrong with that? Fiber helps you feel full and provides a steady stream of energy. Without it, you may end up eating more just to feel full.

**GO FOR THE GRAIN** Many companies use sneaky claims like “multigrain” and “good source of whole grain” to make their products seem healthier. To get the most out of your loaf, look for labels that say “100 percent whole grain.”

When it comes to sugar content, cereal is not such a sweet deal!

## 6 SUGARY CEREALS

Most of us grow up thinking a bowl of cereal is a healthy way to start the day, but the truth is, what's in most boxes in the cereal aisle isn't much better for you than what's in the cookie aisle. The sky-high sugar content is to blame (a bowl of your typical sugary cereal has as much sugar as three chocolate chip cookies).

**BE A CEREAL SLEUTH** To score a healthy a.m. meal, check the nutrition label of your cereal for these three factors: At least 5 grams of fiber, 5 grams (or less) of sugar, and a whole-grain (like whole wheat or whole oats) listed as the first ingredient.

## 7 HOT DOGS

Sorry to rain on your barbecue, but your grill fave isn't a great choice. A new study found that eating **processed** meats increases the risk of heart disease and cancer.

**BE A MEAT MAVEN** When it comes to eating meat, you should also hold off on too many burgers and steak, as red meat may also raise your risk of disease.

Not all of your pork hot dog's makeup is the type of meat you might expect. Up to 20% of it can be a paste-like version of pork, which could contain **pulverized** pieces of bone.

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## CHEESE PUFFS (and other snack foods, such as potato chips)

They have a long list of ingredients, yet have almost no nutritional value—not a great combo. What's worse, many experts believe these treats are actually designed to make you keep eating! A combination of man-made flavors and the melt-in-your-mouth quality of the puffs prevent your brain from knowing when to hit the brakes.

**SMART SNACKING** If you're looking for a quick bite, protein and fiber are what you need to feel full and energized. Some smart snacks that are high in both: hummus and baby carrots, an apple and peanut butter, or low-fat string cheese and whole-grain crackers.

Warning: You may not be able to stop snacking.

This is full of saturated fat, which is bad for your heart.

These guys have a ton of saturated fat and sugar. Definitely NOT the breakfast of champions!

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## FULL-FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS

Dairy is a great source of calcium and a must for still-growing bones, but butter, whole milk, ice cream, and cheese are oozing with saturated fat—which is unhealthy and can lead to heart disease. Reach for fat-free dairy and skim milk instead.

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## DOUGHNUTS

These breakfast bad guys have pretty much nothing in them that's good for you—and a lot that's bad. Eat one before school and you'll likely have an energy crash by third period due to a spike—then dip—in blood-sugar levels caused by the high sugar content.

## PACKAGE DEALS

These 10 foods aren't the only ones to avoid. Here's some help decoding your daily menu. *Hint: Stay away from processed foods whenever possible.*

**1. READ IT.** If a label has multiple ingredients you can't pronounce, skip it. Chances are the product is full of **preservatives** and other no-good fillers.

**2. TEST IT.** Some packaged foods can actually be pretty healthy. To filter the good from the bad, ask yourself: Could I make this at home using the ingredients on the label? You can whip up some homemade hummus, but not a can of spray cheese—so leave that on the shelf.

**3. PAIR IT.** Balance your intake of processed foods, like chicken nuggets, by pairing them with healthy sides, like carrot sticks or grapes.