

**EPISODE 774**

# **5 Horrifying Ways That Ultra-Processed Foods Impact Your Health**

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**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Welcome to the model health show. This is fitness nutrition experts, Shawn Stevenson, and I'm so grateful for you tuning in with me today. Let's get right into it. A recent analysis published in the BMJ determined that the average American's diet now consists of about 60% Ultra processed foods. Now we know that our diet has changed dramatically in the last few decades, but the question is, are there any specific health ramifications that are now seen in clinical data? And that's what this episode is all about, because some of the things that are now seen in our peer reviewed data is going to shock you in regards to our consumption of ultra processed foods. And we're going to start with number one on this list of five horrifying ways that ultra processed foods are impacting human health, and number one is the impact that it's having on bone health.

A meta-analysis of over 50 human studies on diet and bone health, published in the peer reviewed journal *Nutrients*, found that the people eating the standard, "Western diet", high in ultra processed foods, had significantly lower bone mineral density, higher risk of fractures, and higher rates of bone loss. The study also noted, specifically, higher rates of minerals being leached from the bones and impaired bone remodeling. Another recent study, titled *Ultra Processed Foods Target Bone Quality*, cited in the journal *Bone Research*, used advanced imaging, including electron microscopy, CT scans and more to analyze the impact of ultra processed food in animal models.

Here's what the scientists found, "young rats fed ultra processed food suffer from growth retardation due to lesions in their tibial growth plates. The bone mineral density decreases significantly and the structural parameters of the bone deteriorate, presenting a sieve-like appearance in the cortices and poor trabecular parameters in long bones and vertebrae. This results in inferior mechanical performance of the entire bone with a high fracture risk." They go on to state, "RNA sequence analysis of the growth plates demonstrated an imbalance in extracellular matrix formation and degradation and impairment of proliferation, differentiation, and mineralization processes."

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Our findings highlight for the first time the severe impact of consuming ultra processed foods on the growing skeleton." Now, if you're watching the video version of this episode, you can actually see the lesions in the bone formation and dramatically lower bone mineral density in these animals eating ultra processed foods versus the control group.

Now, this should be shocking in and of itself, just knowing that. Eating these ultra processed foods are causing our bone mineral density to decline, increasing our risk of fracture. And also this phenomenon where these nutrients, our minerals are being leached from our bones when we eat these foods.

Number one, they are deficient in these key minerals, but also they're causing our bodies to actually pull out things like calcium to nullify some of the excess in these kinds of acidic tier nutrients. In particular things like phosphorus, that can definitely be in much higher ratio in ultra processed foods.

And so it is a full circle. of drama when we're eating these ultra processed foods when it comes to our bones. But, again, keep in mind it's not just what these ultra processed foods are bringing into the body, it's what they're not bringing into our bodies. And being that these foods are highly refined and riddled with newly invented chemicals, they are often devoid of essential nutrients that are found in real foods.

Sometimes, ultra processed foods can be, " enriched with synthetic nutrients." But there are literally hundreds of naturally occurring nutrients in real foods that are completely absent in ultra processed foods. One of the essential nutrients that are notoriously absent from ultra processed foods are the omega 3 fatty acids that are critical for our brain health, the health of our nervous system, and also, The formation and health of our bones.

A study published in the peer reviewed journal plos one found that the consumption of Omega threes can improve bone mineral density specifically in the hips and the lumbar spine. This for me. It's very personal because these were the two areas of my body that at the age of 20, I was diagnosed with severe degeneration in my lumbar spine, and also I broke my hip at

track practice just a few years before that. Obviously I was severely nutrient deficient growing up on a diet that was predominantly ultra processed foods right here in the United States. As we mentioned, the average adult's diet is over 60 % ultra processed foods.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** A more recent analysis, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, looked at ultra processed food consumption by U. S. children. And they looked at this for 20 years, and they found that around 1999, the average child's diet was already Over 60 % ultra processed foods, but by 2018, that number had reached almost 70 % of the average child's diet in the United States being made of ultra processed foods.

And when we're talking about these averages or the mean number, we're looking at ratios all along the spectrum of how much ultra processed foods. A child is eating. All right, so there are going to be some kids that are at the lower end of that spectrum. Maybe they're eating 10 % ultra processed foods and they're going to be kids at the other end that are eating maybe 90 % ultra processed foods, and that's where I was living.

All right. There was a time in my life where I was eating fast food every single day and now that I've been working in this field of Nutrition and wellness for over 20 years. I'm well aware that the foods that I was eating. It would be incredibly rare if I got in One gram of omega 3s in a day and also we're not even talking about the quality and whether or not they were oxidized. I was completely deficient in this critical nutrient for my brain for my nervous system. Could that have been contributing to the pain?

I was experiencing could have been contributing to my depressed mental state? Could this have been contributing to my poor Bone health in this kind of arthritic condition of my spine and absolutely that's what the data indicates. So with ultra processed foods, when it comes to our bone health, it's not just the fact that these ultra processed foods, these chemicals are degrading our bodies, it's what they're not providing. They're taking up the space that could be filled by real food. And by the way, I'm a huge, huge advocate of making sure that we are targeting omega 3 rich foods in our nutrition. framework, regardless of what nutrition framework we subscribe to, we know that the densest source of omega threes are going to be found primarily in seafood.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's just kind of far and away the best source noted in peer review data. In fact, a study published in the journal neurology found that people who eat at least one seafood meal per week do in fact perform better on cognitive skills tests. Now, this is also a great place to supplement. And. Fish oil is definitely one of those categories that has a lot of science behind it.

But we know today, and this is also according to NYU neuroscientist, Dr. Lisa Moscone, the very best source of omega 3s are not in the fish itself, it's in the fish eggs. This is why things like caviar are so renowned and so expensive. And so fish roe is the most incredible source of omega 3s that you're going to find.

And if you're wondering just how much these omega 3s matter when it comes to the health of your brain, well, we can look at another study that's published in the journal neurology that used MRIs and analyzed the brains of study participants and found that people who ate less than four grams of the most notable Omega 3s when it comes to brain health, DHA in particular, but DHA and EPA, but less than 4 grams of DHA per day showed the highest rate of brain shrinkage.

Alright, so the brain is atrophying prematurely without getting DHA in the diet. While those who ate 6 grams or more had the healthiest, shrink proof brains. So again, huge fan, of omega 3 supplementation in particular we got to make sure that the sourcing is right. And the fish roe supplement that I use and my family uses is made from 100 wild caught fish From pristine waters sourced from sustainable minded fishermen who are committed to preserving fish runs for future generations. This wild caught fish roe is gently freeze dried to keep the full range of nutrients and omega 3s intact and undamaged.

It's 10% not pure, no binders, no fillers, none of that stuff. And this is the fish roe from PaleoValley. Head over to [paleovalley.com/model](http://paleovalley.com/model) and they're going to hook you up with 15 % off applied automatically at checkout for their wild caught fish roe. They also have some wonderful Low, minimally processed snacks for your family, for kids, and we can do so much better than the garbage that's out there on store shelves.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Paleo Valley, all organic and making sure that they're sourcing the very best ingredients. And also again, no artificial sweeteners and flavors and all this craziness, just real food, real ingredients, and real healthy results for your family. Head over to [paleovalley.com/](https://paleovalley.com/) model. You get 15 % off storewide.

Now this is just number one on our list of these five horrifying ways that ultra processed foods can impact our health. We're going to move on to number two on this list and number two, is the science affirmed impact that ultra processed foods have on our hormones? One of the most concerning but yet little known aspects about ultra processed foods are their high concentrations of hormone disrupting chemicals.

Let's just take thylates for example. An analysis cited in the journal Healthcare in 2021 states "Thylates are a series of widely used chemicals that demonstrate to be Endocrine disruptors and are detrimental to human health." While a recent study titled ultra processed food consumption and exposure to phthalates and bisphenols was conducted by researchers at John Hopkins School of Public Health, and it revealed some shocking findings.

The scientists found that higher intake of ultra processed food does in fact lead to higher levels of thylates showing up in human bodies. After analyzing over 2,000 study participants, they discovered that for every 10 % of your diet that consists of ultra processed foods, it led to an additional 8 % higher level of thylate metabolites.

So if someone ate a diet that consisted of 60 % ultra processed food, which is the average amount by an adult here in the United States, they'd have a 48 % higher level of phthalates showing up in their body. Again, these are KNOWN, known, well established hormone disrupting chemicals. Now, on the other hand, the scientists noted, "higher energy intake from minimally processed food was associated with lower concentrations of phthalates and bisphenols." Now, one of the most alarming aspects of this study noted by the researchers was the concentrations of these newly invented Hormone disrupting chemicals were showing up even higher in children than in adults. Now, do we have any data on whether or not this is harming kids?

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Well, over 10 years ago, data was collected by researchers at Harvard and Brown University on phthalate exposure and pediatric health outcomes. Thylates have an increased risk of developing asthma, eczema and other allergic conditions. Thylates were also found to create alterations in physical development, with the researchers stating “fetal and childhood exposure to some thylates may perturb normal development”. And exposure is linked to,” autistic like child behavior”.

This is the stuff that pisses me off. This has been known at the highest levels of the scientific community and education, these institutions like Harvard, that this is doing harm to children. And yet, it is still rampant in our food supply. And as a matter of fact, these ultra processed food manufacturers are specifically targeting our children.

They're utilizing the most advanced psychological manipulation tactics to market these products to our children. If you think about a cereal aisle, right? And I have nostalgic childhood feelings for a lot of these cereals for sure. When I'm seeing Toucan Sam, right? Fruit Loops. And by the way, Fruit Loops is spelled F R O O T Alright, it's not fruit.

There's no fruit in Froot Loops, but he said follow your nose, right? He's a little cartoon character. He seemed cool. He said follow your, follow, come, and it tastes so fire. It tastes so good, right? Got Toucan Sam, Captain Crunch. He's not a captain. He's captain, alright? They sliding in, they trying to, you know, swivel around what's legal, right?

Cause they're lying. All right. He's not a captain except diabetes. All right. Got Captain Crunch. Who's kind of like, he's kind of like my play uncle. All right. To be honest, you know, I have a lot of male figures, you know what I'm saying? Captain Crunch, right? Crunch bear, all crunch berries. Come on now. One of my very first childhood memories.

Literally, one of my first memories, most beautiful memories was with my great grandmother. Alright, it's amazing when you get to meet your great grandmother. Alright, my great grandmother took me on a senior citizen bus. Alright, there's a little bus that picks them up from the, from the home. Took me to the grocery store, came back to her spot.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** She poured me a bowl of Fruity Pebbles. Ooh, I can still taste it to this day and had Fred Flintstone, another cartoon character that I loved right there on the box. And that was our Instagram. Read in the back of that cereal box. That was my Instagram. That was my Facebook. All this other stuff didn't exist.

That was the s t. Being able to just sit there and look. Sometimes there'd be little puzzles on the back. You know. There's a toy in the box! And they give you a toy! What more could How blatant could it be? Have your child eat this ultra processed chemical conglomeration full of all these different food dyes and newly invented chemicals and thylates.

We got a toy for ya! It's going to be great. They're marketing to our children. Here in the United States, at this point, with all the data that we have, we know that it's wrong. We know it's wrong. But what are we going to do about it? It starts with education, but we have to demand better. Because these companies are not going to go quietly into the night as this data is coming out.

As a matter of fact, and just talking about breakfast cereals in particular, breakfast cereals marketed to children have over 40 % more refined sugar. Then cereals marketed to adults and this is according to the environmental working group plus the most popular Chemical and sugar laden breakfast cereals like Fruit Loops like Cap'n Crunch and like my all time favorite Apple Jacks contain known Hormone disruptors like BHT.

It's right there on the box also chemical food dyes that are in several peer reviewed studies linked to ADHD and As well as several potential carcinogens IE cancer causing agents and obesogens IE obesity causing agents. But instead of these serial companies being honest about what these serials really are that are being marketed to our children, which are again, ultra processed compilation of potentially disease causing ingredients.

With cereal sales actually declining in recent years, the pandemic times cereal sales skyrocketed. All right. It was, it was an all time moment for cereal, right? The nostalgia, the comfort, the accessibility. After things “opened back up”, cereal sales declined. And that boom that companies were banking on began to go away.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And with cereal sales declining. Kellogg's in particular has gone on the offensive with a new marketing campaign advocating for families to save money. By eating cereal for dinner, there's literally a new commercial advocating that families to eat these ultra processed fake foods as a meal for family dinner.

In fact, just in case you didn't see it yet, here's the commercial from Kellogg's featuring Tony the Tiger busting in. Say it with your chest, chest out! With Toucan Sam right along with him, busting in. Telling the family, hey, we got that cereal for you. We got that hitter. We got that noo noo for you for dinner tonight.

Check this commercial out. When I say cereal, you say dinner. Cereal! Dinner! Cereal! Dinner! Chicken! You can, uh, have the night off, chicken. Oh, okay. I'll go marinate. Cereal! Dinner! Cereal! Dinner! Fake foods as a meal for family dinner. In fact, Here's Kellogg's CEO talking about their plans. The cereal category has always been quite affordable and it tends to be a great destination when consumers are under pressure.

So some of the things that we're doing is first messaging. We got to reach the consumer where they are. So we're advertising about cereal for dinner. If you think about the cost of cereal for a family versus what they might otherwise do, that's going to be much more affordable. In general, the cereal category is a place that a lot of folks might come to.

Because the price of a bowl of cereal with milk and with fruit is less than a dollar. So you can imagine why a consumer under pressure might find that to be a good place to go. Right. I'm all for innovation and marketing, but the idea of having cereal for dinner, um, is there the potential for that to land the wrong way?

Uh, we don't think so. In fact, it's landing really well right now, Carl. When we look at all of our data, of course we would know that breakfast cereal is the number one choice for in-home consumption. We understand that for breakfast. It turns out that over 25 % of our consumption is outside the breakfast occasion.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** A lot of it's at dinner, and that, that occasion continues to grow, as well as the snacking occasion, but, um, cereal for dinner is something that is, is probably more on trend now, and we would expect to continue as that consumer is under pressure. You can't make this stuff up. You just, at this point, to see this, it is, it, it's, it's comical.

For those who aren't aware. We become victimized by these things. I didn't know I would have seen this commercial and I've been, I've had cereal late night, many a night. So it would have been nothing new to me except permission. I would've just got permission through the commercial. Like, oh yeah, for sure.

For me, that late night hitter, even when I met my wife, she can affirm this. Boxes upon boxes of Honey Nut Cheerios. Alright. Most of my diet was real whole foods. But for some reason, I couldn't let my affair with that bee go. Alright. It was unhealthy. Alright. This connection that we had was a toxic relationship.

Couldn't let it go. Alright. And um, you know, so again, just being aware, being able to see the nonsense on display and to know what they're doing. They're getting hit in their pockets. When people are Taking more time and understanding there's a movement right now for health and wellness and more families becoming galvanized to make healthier choices because we're seeing the impact that it's having on our children and on ourselves and there's change happening.

We have a lot of work to do, all right, because the people that are still in it, that are stuck in it, there's a lot of them and they're stuck in it. And so what we've got to do is understand that change is happening. This is beyond some feathers getting ruffled. Their profits are getting hit. And they're going to pull out these last ditch efforts.

Meanwhile, we have to shine even brighter. And this is why I'm so grateful. My latest project was dedicated to the family. It's the Eat Smarter Family Cookbook. I did that with a purpose. I knew that this would happen. I knew that this was coming. But I know that we've got resources. I actually, um, as of this recording, just this past week, I was invited to speak at my youngest son's school.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** And there was a panel of physicians and wonderful people doing work in, in, in dentistry and urology and the list goes on and on. But what I was able to do, because I've spoken over the years at many, many schools. know how to connect with kids. And so I just made it really interactive, made them have some fun, being able to shout out things and, you know, have a good time.

But also I brought books for everybody, right? They had grades three through eighth at this assembly. And every one of those kids left home with the copy of the East Marder family cookbook. And oh my goodness, I can't even tell you the love. That I've experienced not, well, of course, if I come on campus, yes, it's a lot of love, but specifically that my youngest son is experiencing and sharing with me, which is, you know, kids are coming up and saying how they've tried this recipe and that recipes like that every day.

He's like, these kids are actually at home making these recipes with their families. I couldn't get any better compliment than that. That's what it's all about. And so, wow, we've got resources to, to insulate ourselves against this, but we've got to pour ourselves even more into wellness. And. It starts with education, absolutely.

But it's the practical thing. It's putting things into, into consistent practice for ourselves, for our families and understanding that, you know, we've got a challenge ahead of us in changing this. But change is happening. And so, getting back to this list of these five horrifying ways that ultra processed foods are impacting our health, even the mission behind this episode is to detail, like, these are the things we know are specifically happening that you are probably not being told about.

Your friends, your family, your community is probably, high probability, has no idea about these things, but I'm gonna tell you. And you're gonna be armed with that knowledge. And so moving on to our third on this list of these five horrifying ways that ultra processed foods are impacting our health. Number three is the impact that it's having on heart disease. A meta analysis conducted by scientists at the Department of Epidemiology at NYU reviewed dozens of studies on ultra processed food and heart disease.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** The researcher stated, "Cardiovascular diseases constitute the leading cause of mortality in the United States and globally, accounting for approximately one third of all deaths. Poor diet is the leading risk factor related to the overall cardiovascular disease burden in the United States and is estimated to be associated with more than half of the U. S. deaths due to coronary heart disease and stroke. More than half of the deaths from heart disease are now strongly associated with ultra processed foods.

Just to reiterate that point. They went on to state that diet unequivocally plays a pivotal role in primary and secondary cardiovascular disease prevention". This study also goes on to detail how ultra processed foods trigger endothelial dysfunction and injury. These ultra processed foods create a pro inflammatory state in the body.

Increase hypertension, increase insulin resistance, and other injurious actions that contribute to the development of heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. This is not a joke. Eating these fake foods is really killing us. It's hurting us. It's not normal. It's not okay. It's killing us. Now, this is not, I promise you, in the right circumstances, a couple of fruity pebbles.

Who knows? I might interact with them. I don't know. I'm, I'm just being 1000 with you. I don't have a desire to interact with that, but it's not to villainize that. The fruity pebbles do exist. They do exist. If this is literally an occasional thing that finds its way into our diet, so be it. It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a fun thing.

It's something that humans have created and some people I know are thinking like, It's not fun to die. It's not fun to die, Sean. But if we have a more soft perspective and a soft place for people to land in this communication, because absolutely the data's clear, this is killing us. Yes. If we go so far to an extreme to where.

We completely villainize these foods and the people behind them. We've got to understand. A lot of times these are good people who have good intentions, but they might be misguided in their approach to these things. A lot of times, not every time. There are some bad intentions out here. Alright, there are.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** But if we have a softer place to land and to know like, Hey, okay, maybe 20 % of your diet is that kind of stuff. Right? 80 % of your diet is real, sustainable, healthy foods that humans have been eating for thousands of years. And then you got some room to play around with the newly invented, and this is a term, an interesting term that I saw in this research, again, a peer reviewed study. They called it cosmetic foods, cosmetically treated foods. Alright, so, these ultra processed foods are the BBLs of foods. All right. They're the Botox of foods. They're the literal lip fillers of foods. All right. But we want to base our health practices on things that create beauty from the inside out and real wellness.

And so, you know, again, just putting this in perspective, we're talking about shifting that ratio. And, um, that's what it's really all about at the end of the day. But in addition, just to dig further into this heart disease connection, in addition, a collaborative study. Conducted by researchers at Yale, the University of Missouri, my alma mater, and others titled, Our Hidden Enemy.

Ultra processed foods, inflammation, and the battle for heart health. Detailed how ultra processed foods contribute to oxidative stress, inflammation, and endotoxemia. that dramatically increases the risk of cardiovascular disease. One aspect of this study that included over 105, 000 people found that people with the highest ratio of ultra processed foods in their diet had nearly a 30 % greater incidence of developing heart disease than those who ate the lowest amount.

Alright, so we've got actual numbers here on, if you eat this %age more ultra processed foods, you're increasing your risk. of this outcome more and more and more as well. So, again, we're going through five of the horrifying ways that ultra processed foods are impacting our health. Number three was its impact on heart disease.

We're gonna move on to number four, which is the impact that it's having on our microbiome and gut health. Also in that study, again titled Our Hidden Enemy, Ultra processed Foods, Inflammation, and the Battle for Heart Health, the researchers noted how chemicals commonly found in ultra processed foods derange human gut health, contribute to dysbiosis of gut bacteria, and create hyperpermeability of our gut lining.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** All of these factors, the scientists noted, contribute to reduced production of short chain fatty acids, a. k. a. SCFAs, that help to keep inflammation in check. They increase endotoxins in the bloodstream and many other problems. Another study published in the Lancet noted how commonly used emulsifiers that are rampant in ultra processed foods, “induced metabolic Perturbations, alterations to the gut microbiota, inflammation, and colon carcinogenesis in animal studies”.

The researchers go on to state something else that's largely overlooked. Listen to this. The scientist said, “So far, except in particular cases, there are no human studies on additive exposure and long term health outcomes, and there is hardly any data on mixtures of these chemicals and their potential cocktail effects”.

So they're talking about, not only do we not have We don't have high quality studies on all of these newly invented chemicals that we're putting into ultra processed foods. We damn sure don't have studies on the interaction of all of these chemicals. They might even be studied in isolation. But we don't know about this “cocktail effect” or the entourage effect.

That happens when these chemicals are combined. We damn sure don't have data on that. The public is an experiment. Plain and simple. These ultra processed food products that have become the majority of our diet, the FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, that's supposed to be at the helm in looking out for public health when it comes to our food supply.

They have no idea. Nor do they care. About the compilation, about the entourage effect, about, as these researchers called it, the cocktail effects of all these chemicals coming together in one ultra processed food product. They have no idea what the impact is going to be on our bodies, on our brains, on the health of our children.

It's just something that we've normalized. And we've also normalized poor health. All you've got to do is look around. We are not okay. According to the CDC, 60 % of American adults now have at least one chronic debilitating disease. At least one. 40 % of our citizens have two or more chronic diseases.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** We are the most chronically diseased nation in the history of humanity. Yes, we've had times of, of famines, we've had times of plagues, but right now, food induced, lifestyle induced chronic diseases. That's the name of the game. All the while, these companies are profiting from our suffering through the dissemination of this fake food, but also through the dissemination of the drugs used to treat the symptoms that occur when we eat these fake foods.

The sure thing to bet on in our economy today is to bet on the poor health of our citizens because that'll make you money. Now circling back to our earlier study that was titled Our Hidden Enemy, Ultra Processed Foods, Inflammation, and the Battle for Heart Health. The scientists specifically noted the use of artificial sweeteners in ultra processed foods.

In particular, those that are marketed, those ultra processed food products that are marketed as “low sugar.” Like low sugar instant oatmeal, soda, and so called diabetic snacks. Those artificial sweeteners are used in these ultra processed foods are now identified as a major disruptor of gut health.

A study published in Advances in Nutrition found that sucralose, one of these artificial sweeteners, Sucralose alters the microbiome in a way that promotes inflammation. The meta analysis also showed that mice given another popular artificial sweetener, saccharin, had increased expression of inflammation in their livers, which the researchers attributed to altered gut bacteria.

Some researchers rightfully point to the high doses of artificial sweeteners given in many animal studies, but the negative alteration in this study was with 0.3 milligrams of saccharin per milliliter, a dose equivalent to the FDA approved acceptable daily intake for humans. That's a problem. It's a big, big problem.

And this is coming along again, the marketing. Hey, if you're already diabetic, if you already have insulin resistance, Eat these ultra processed foods. We're using artificial, newly invented sweeteners for you. We got you. We got you. They don't got you. They're capping This is ridiculous. Cap'n crunch.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** They're cappin crunchin Now, one of the things to take back our health, and to enjoy the process, this does not mean, again, even in the, in the vein of insulin resistance and, and diabetes and prediabetes that is rampant in our society today. Humans like sweet things. It's not to villainize that. It's not to suffer through not having things that are sweet.

When we evolved, seeking out sweet things. Even today, you come across a hunter gatherer tribe. If they're out doing their thing, you know, hunting, gathering, whatever the case might be, and they come across, they come across some honey? Sting me up. They only, they don't care. Sting me up. We're, we're getting to this honey, all right. We've always sought out sweet and tasty things, you know, it's not to bash human biology. We're driven to eat things that taste good. But what we need to do is reclaim our connection with food, our sense of real Authentic taste and real authentic sweetness, even and do our best to minimize our interaction with the highly refined sugars on store shelves, for example. Do our best to minimize our interactions with these artificial sweeteners if again, there is a context where these things are still appropriate.

But if our goal is real food. Real human health that has data to back this up and also thousands of years of use by humans Look no further than my all time Favorite sweetener and to even call it a sweetener is is disrespectful It just is but this is what people call it So I'll call I'll say that just for a communication sake but we got to put some respect on honey's name Honey's gonna roll up to the studio and confront you one day.

All right, because it's more than just a mere sweetener. Unlike other sweeteners, raw honey, clear, be clear, raw honey, real honey has been found to actually improve insulin sensitivity. Not only does it not cause all this damage and dysfunction when we're talking about our insulin sensitivity like conventional sweeteners.

It's been found to actually improve it. A recent study published in the peer reviewed journal, Nutrients, detailed how raw honey intake can improve fasting blood sugar levels, improve lipid metabolism, and reduce the risk of heart disease. Additionally, the scientists noted the vast antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that honey has.



**SHAWN STEVENSON:** In addition to its impact on our metabolic health, a research site in the journal, evidence based complementary and alternative medicine determined that honey antioxidants have nootropic effects such as memory enhancement. Plus, a randomized, double blind, placebo controlled study revealed that honey was able to outperform a placebo and significantly reduce cough frequency and severity at night, and improve sleep quality.

These other sweeteners and artificial sweeteners, they can't do that! Honey's different. Honey's different. Honey's just in a league of its own. To call it a mere sweetener again is disrespect. But we got to keep in mind, with any of these wonderful things, there are going to be people out here, there are going to be companies that are not connected to the process, that don't care as much.

And they're just trying to make a dollar. And I've found myself over the years, truly, I've spent countless hours experimenting, researching, you know, sourcing, and communicating with different companies to find the best of the best. And there are only a few things over the years that I talk about. You know, these companies, when I talk about them, I know them.

I get pitched a medallion, hundreds, hundreds of companies. But I just talk about the things that I actually use, that my family uses, that I love, that I vetted. And when it comes to honey, when it comes to bee products, Beekeepers Naturals is truly, truly doing something remarkable. It's really, really special.

They're doing third party testing for over 70 known pesticide residues that show up in bee products. They're also looking at things like heavy metals, arsenic, lead, bacteria like E. coli. They're making sure that none of that stuff is coming along. With this remarkable food product. And also they're dedicated and investing in sustainable beekeeping to help save our bee populations.

And now they're growing thankfully. And a company like that deserves our support, but most importantly, our families and our bodies deserve. This nutritional input, highly recommend popping over to [beekeeper's naturals.com](http://beekeeper'snaturals.com).

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Go to B-E-E-K-E-E-P-E-R-S [naturals.com/model](https://naturals.com/model) and you're going to get 20% off automatically applied at checkout storewide, definitely check out their superfood, honey.

It's one of my, I love it. I love it. The Superfood honey. Their propolis immune spray is incredible. Their nootropics based on royal jelly, phenomenal. I just can't say enough good things about them. They're truly amazing. Pop over there, check them out. [beekeeper's naturals.com](https://naturals.com) forward slash model to get that sweetness into our lives, but in a real wholesome way.

All right, so again, looking at this list of the five ways that ultra processed foods are impacting our health. The last one that you just covered is the impact that it has on our microbiome and gut health. Now we got one more that we're going to cover and this is the impact these ultra processed foods are having on our mental health.

A brand new meta analysis published just this month. As of this recording, it just came out hot off the presses. This was published in the British Medical Journal, the BMJ, one of the most prestigious peer reviewed journals in the world. This new meta analysis found that people eating the highest ratios of ultra processed foods had a 48% to 53 % higher risk of having anxiety and other common mental disorders.

Another recent study, co authored by researchers at Harvard's T. H. Chan School of Public Health, titled, Consumption of Ultra Processed Food and Risk of Depression, found that participants who were in the top fifth of consumers of ultra processed foods who were eating nine or more servings per day, which I was exceeding that.

They had a 50 % higher risk of developing depression than those in the bottom fifth of consumers eating four or fewer servings per day. Now, what can come up in some of these studies? Again, these were really well constructed studies. Because of the ethics involved in Outright poisoning humans intentionally, like strictly having people to eat these ultra processed foods for a stint of time to see the impact that it has on their mental health.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's sketchy, so you got to use a lot of population data and it can be one of those situations where what came first, the depression and then the eating of more ultra processed foods or is it the ultra processed foods causing more depression? They go hand in hand. It's bi directional. We already know this.

We already know this. And we do have some leading researchers, like Dr. Chris Palmer, who's a psychiatrist out of Harvard University. And we'll put his interview that he did here on the Model Health Show for you in the show notes. But his research and his work with his patients has affirmed in a big way. It was already there in the data, but now in a much, much bigger way that metabolic health is mental health. Our mental health is, it's not connected.

It's not deeply influenced. They're inseparable from our metabolic health. And all the research we've went through thus far is looking at how ultra processed foods are impacting our metabolic health. And metabolic health is. The formation of bone, that is a metabolic process. Our cardiometabolic health, our gut health, this all has to do with metabolism.

Metabolism isn't in this pithy box that we tend to think about in terms of like, losing weight. But metabolism is life itself. And understanding that they're not just connected, they are one and the same. So if we have poor metabolic health, we will, very likely, we have struggles with our mental health as well.

And the question is, why, why, specifically when it comes to mental health, when we're talking about the expression or the experience that we have as human beings, we're talking a lot about our hormones, our neurotransmitters, these molecules of feeling. Now these molecules of feeling don't just come out of nowhere.

They don't just pop in from an alternate dimension. These molecules of feeling that we produce are made from the food that we eat. These are literally the compounds that are making up our brain and our nervous system, our hormones, our neurotransmitters, the makeup of all the trillions of cells in our bodies.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** It's all made from food or the lack thereof. And the thing about the human body, we are incredibly resilient. We can have all manner of chronic diseases. And still, our body keeps adapting. That's what a lot of disease onset, when we see these symptoms manifest. If we didn't have labels for all these things, and we just looked at this objectively, as a rational human being, a rational scientist, we would see that these are adaptations.

When we develop insulin resistance, when we're flooding our cells and tissues and our bloodstream with abhorrent amounts of sugar every day, there's an adaptation that takes place. But we label it as Diabetes, here's a metformin, here's insulin, here's a statin for your cardiovascular risk, here's lisinopril, here's antidepressant, here's this, here's that, here's that, and we start piling on the treatment of symptoms.

Instead of acknowledging the phenomenal feedback that our body is giving us when we're venturing into things that are harming us, our body is always giving us feedback, whether this is through symptoms and how we feel, our emotional. Stability, our emotional fitness, our mental fitness, or physical symptoms that we kind of, again, we unfortunately put these in different baskets when they're all connected.

It's not just connected. They're all one in the same. It's happening all together in one sovereign human body. There isn't cells that are just off in isolation that aren't getting communication from every other cell. Alright, it's all connected. You are connected. All these things matter. And what we're building our bodies with matters.

And that's the ultimate message with these ultra processed foods. We get to choose what we're making our bodies out of. We get to choose what we're making our hormones out of, our neurotransmitters, our brain itself. We get to choose. And so at the end of the day, what is the mission? What is the objective as we leave here?

Eat more real food. Eat more real food. That's the solution. Whatever ratio you're at now, maybe you're eating what the average American is eating. 60 % ultra processed foods. Just change that ratio a little bit. Do 50 50 or flip it, right? Do 60 % real food, 40 % the other stuff. Change that ratio.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** Increase your intake of real food, and it helps a crowd out the other stuff, alright? Let's not, especially if you're in a place where Ultra processed foods are a big part of your diet and it's a big attraction. You got the fatal attraction, you got the Glenn Close relationship with it. If that's the situation, don't try to villainize or not eat that stuff.

Just add in more of the good stuff. Add in more real food. All right? Start your day, in particular, the first meal of the day, make sure that it is dominating with real, nutritious foods. And a dabble of the other stuff, that's cool. All right? That's the mission. That's the mandate. And I appreciate you so much for tuning into this episode today.

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All the social media platforms out there. Of course, I'm doing a lot more on Instagram. So you could share it on Instagram, share it in your IG story. And you can tag me. Of course. I love to see that. I'm always checking for that when the new episodes come out. So tag me. I'm @shawnmode., share the love that means so much.

And also if you are listening on Apple podcasts, I have a specific request and mission for you. And I would appreciate this so much. Make sure that you are following the show. I don't want you to miss an episode. A recent IOS update created some static on the line with shows getting distributed. And this has happened across the board with a lot of my friends who have some of these are some of the biggest shows in the world.

And Apple just came in messing up stuff, but they're also messing with their bottom line because they're preventing people who want this incredible information from getting ease and access to it. So pop over to, I think it's in the right hand corner of the app. And when you see the model health show right there, pull that up, top right hand corner. Maybe it's a little drop down box. Make sure that you're following the show so you don't miss a thing because I'm telling you now! We were talking about this before we even got rolling.

**SHAWN STEVENSON:** My team and I here in the studio. We got some, I'm not playing. We've got some incredible stuff coming up and We're just getting started. I'm just getting warmed up and I appreciate you so much for being on this mission with me. We've got some epic masterclasses coming your way very, very soon. Amazing, amazing world class guests. So make sure to stay tuned, take care, have an amazing day. I'll talk to you soon. And for more after the show, make sure to head over to the model health show.com. That's where you can find all of the show notes. You can find transcriptions, videos for each episode, and if you've got a comment, you can leave me a comment there as well. And please make sure to head over to iTunes and leave us a rating to let everybody know that the show is awesome, and I appreciate that so much. And take care, I promise to keep giving you more powerful, empowering, great content to help you transform your life. Thanks for tuning in.