# Experts warn ultra-processed foods may be driving rise in bowel cancer among under-50s



A video released by colorectal experts from Oxford has highlighted concerns about a potential link between the rising incidence of bowel cancer and the growing consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPF). The video features Professor Sir Neil Mortensen, a leading colorectal surgeon based in Oxford, and Dr Chris van Tulleken, chair of the colorectal charity Occtopus.

The discussion centres on the troubling trend of increasing bowel cancer diagnoses among individuals under the age of 50. The experts attribute this rise partly to changes in modern dietary habits, emphasising the surge in the intake of ultra-processed foods. These products are characterised by extensive refining and often contain additives, preservatives, and artificial flavourings.

The video delves into the scientific understanding of how long-term exposure to ultra-processed foods may negatively impact gut health. Professor Mortensen explained that such foods might increase inflammation and disrupt the gut microbiome, potentially contributing to the development of cancerous cells in the colon and rectum. He stated, "We are seeing a significant rise in younger people diagnosed with this condition, and it’s clear that our modern diet plays a key role in this. Ultra-processed foods, which are high in unhealthy fats, sugars, and additives, are probably having a profound effect on gut health and overall well-being."

Dr Chris van Tulleken highlighted the broader implications of this dietary trend, describing it as "not just a trend but a public health crisis in the making."

The video forms part of Occtopus's ongoing campaign to raise public awareness about the crucial role diet may play in the prevention of bowel cancer. The charity is focused on educating the public about dietary impacts on colorectal health, particularly emphasising the risks associated with the consumption of ultra-processed foods.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://occtopus.org.uk/viewpoints/professor-sir-neil-mortensen-speaks-to-tvs-dr-chris-van-tulleken/> - This page features Professor Sir Neil Mortensen speaking with Dr Chris van Tulleken about the rise in ultra-processed food consumption and its possible impact on bowel cancer, corroborating the involvement of these colorectal experts and their concerns outlined in the article.
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QOTBreQaIk> - This YouTube video with Dr Chris van Tulleken discusses the impact of ultra-processed foods on health, including their characteristics such as being refined, energy dense, and their rapid consumption, supporting the article's description of ultra-processed foods and their effects on gut health.
3. <https://www.usf.edu/news/2024/how-ultra-processed-foods-may-drive-colorectal-cancer-risk.aspx> - This article explains scientific findings on how chronic inflammation from ultra-processed foods can increase colorectal cancer risk by disrupting immune function and promotes the link between modern diet and bowel cancer, aligning with Professor Mortensen's explanation in the article.
4. <https://www.businessinsider.com/scientists-uncover-processed-foods-fuel-colon-cancer-how-offset-damage-2024-12> - This source discusses research that links inflammatory compounds from processed foods to colon cancer growth and highlights the potential for dietary changes to reduce cancer risk, reflecting Dr Chris van Tulleken’s claim that the ultra-processed food trend is a public health crisis.
5. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/bowel-cancer/causes-risks> - Cancer Research UK provides detailed information about bowel cancer, including rising incidence rates in younger people and lifestyle risk factors such as diet, supporting the article’s claim about increasing bowel cancer cases in people under 50 linked to dietary habits.
6. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/healthy-diet> - The World Health Organization’s fact sheet on healthy diet explains the risks posed by high consumption of ultra-processed foods, including additives and preservatives, in relation to chronic diseases such as cancer, supporting the article’s emphasis on the harmful effects of ultra-processed foods on gut and overall health.
7. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25110174.video-highlights-rise-bowel-cancer-among-younger-people/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data