# Ultraprocessed foods linked to increased Parkinson’s risk through gut microbiome disruption



Recent studies have shed light on the alarming connection between ultraprocessed foods and an increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease. According to research led by experts from King’s College London, consistently consuming these foods can disrupt the gut's microbiome, which may, in turn, impact brain health and increase the risk of neurodegenerative conditions.

Ultraprocessed foods, which include items such as crisps, biscuits, and pre-packaged bread, often contain various additives that can harm beneficial gut bacteria. These disruptions in gut health are linked to inflammation—a known contributor to a range of health issues, including cognitive decline. The latest findings echo previous assertions that diets high in these foods may not only affect physical health but also have dire implications for neurological wellbeing.

In the study involving 88 participants, researchers discovered that those diagnosed with Parkinson's had a less diverse gut microbiome compared to healthy controls. Specifically, higher levels of harmful bacteria were found in the guts of Parkinson's patients, which is strongly associated with the disease. Notably, the participants with mild cognitive impairment exhibited not only these detrimental bacteria but also significant declines in beneficial bacterial strains, reinforcing the idea that our gut health plays a crucial role in brain function.

The gut-brain connection has garnered increasing interest, with accumulating evidence suggesting that changes in gut flora can impact neurological health. Researchers have posited that certain bacteria can migrate from the mouth to the gut, potentially amplifying the risk of cognitive decline associated with Parkinson's. Emerging data indicates that maintaining stringent oral hygiene may serve as a protective measure against such neurological issues, with researchers highlighting that conditions like gum disease could exacerbate the symptoms of diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

As the incidence of Parkinson's is projected to rise sharply—from an estimated 153,000 cases currently in the UK to an anticipated 172,000 by 2030—the need for effective preventative strategies becomes more urgent. Contributing factors to this increase are believed to include environmental toxins and an ageing population. In light of these projections, experts stress that dietary interventions aimed at promoting a balanced gut microbiome might significantly reduce the risk or delay the onset of Parkinson's.

In parallel, a study from Chinese researchers found striking evidence that high consumption of ultraprocessed foods may increase the likelihood of showing early symptoms of Parkinson's by nearly threefold. Those consuming 11 or more servings per day were found to be at a particularly heightened risk, with additives in these foods potentially implicated in damaging neurons responsible for dopamine production—an essential neurotransmitter affected in Parkinson's.

While the current research offers a glimpse into the links between diet and Parkinson's, the relationship is complex and multifaceted. As Dr Frederick Clasen, co-author of the study, noted, it is still unclear whether harmful bacteria contribute to cognitive decline or if the physiological changes brought on by Parkinson's allow these bacteria to proliferate. This uncertainty highlights the necessity for further exploration into various lifestyle factors—such as stress, sleep, and exercise—that also influence the microbiome and overall health.

In summary, the desperate need for a better understanding of the intricate relationship between diet, gut health, and Parkinson's disease has never been more urgent. While more extensive research is required to delineate the precise causes and effects, the current findings compel a reconsideration of dietary habits, particularly the consumption of ultraprocessed foods. A balanced diet may not just enhance overall health but could be pivotal in addressing one of the most challenging neurological disorders of our time.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071220/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071220/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071220/)
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* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071220/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7071220/)

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1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-14794427/Diet-mistake-Parkinsons-ultra-processed-food.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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