NOVA Classification of Foods

Group 1 – Unprocessed or minimally processed
These foods are generally in their natural state or have been through minimal processing. These may have been pressed, dried, frozen, pasteurized or fermented. Some can be eaten as is or cooked at home. This group includes:

Plant Based (fiber foods)

- whole fruit
- vegetables
- pulses (dried beans, lentils, peas)
- rice (brown rice and wild rice)
- whole grains such as oats (rolled or steel cut oats, not instant oats), barley, wheat, rye, corn, popcorn (without heavy butter and salt), puffed wheat, puffed corn)
- shelled nuts (without salt and oil)
- seeds

Health recommendations: the majority of a person's calories should come from this list and some of these should be present at every meal and for snacks.

Animal based (no whole plant fiber)

- eggs
- fresh or frozen fish and meat (not processed, grilled or smoked meat), free range, wild caught, organic
- plain milk or reduced fat milk, not chocolate milk or milk products
- natural (no added sugar) yogurt, ok if it has whole fruit in it, but not other additives

Health recommendations: Limit consumption of these foods to no more than 4 oz of meat per day, 2 eggs per week, 6-8 oz of milk (low fat preferred) per day.

Group 2 – Processed culinary ingredients
These foods have been through simple processing. They are used in everyday cooking and are added to other foods. These do not have whole plant fiber in them and are essentially food additives that we often have in our homes. They include:

- cold pressed vegetable oils (such as olive oil)
- butter (unsalted)
- vinegars
- salt
- sugar (this is made with more complex processing)

Health recommendations: these do not have fiber and should be minimized in one's diet. Examples of <u>healthy use</u> would be some oil and vinegar on your salad, a small amount of butter on whole grain bread, adding a teaspoon of sugar or honey to one's tea or coffee once a day, using a small amount of olive oil in a stir fry dish. Examples of <u>too much</u> would be making peanut brittle, making cake or cookies, using more than a tablespoon of butter, olive oil, or sugar in a recipe. Adding more than pinch of salt to one's food.

Group 3 – Processed foods
These foods have been through processing techniques such as canning or bottling to preserve them or add flavor. They are usually made from a combination of foods from groups 1 and 2, and include:

- canned fruit
- beer
- salted nuts or meat
- cheeses of all kinds
- smoked meats
- smoked or canned fish
- whole grain bread

Health recommendations: In general, this group of foods should be kept to a minimum. Best breads are made with whole grains as the main ingredient such as 100% whole wheat bread or Ezekiel 4:9 bread made with sprouted whole grains. Least healthy in this group is smoked or canned meats of all kinds and should be avoided. Also unhealthy is cheese. It is the largest source of saturated fat in America and should be avoided when part of some other food such as pizza, Cheetos, mac and cheese, cheeseburgers, sandwiches, soups, grilled cheese, nachos and cheese, tacos, and burritos.

Group 4 – Ultra processed foods (UPF) These foods should be avoided.

Ultra-processed Foods & Drinks are confections (things mixed together) *of ingredients extracted from whole foods usually combined with sophisticated use of additives* (there are 5-10,000 different types of additives approved by the FDA) *to make them edible, palatable, and* ***most importantly habit forming***.

UPF are foods and drinks that have gone through several industrial procedures. They contain additives that we don't tend to use at home and are only used by the food industry, such as preservatives, emulsifiers, sweeteners and artificial colors. Americans eat most of their calories from this group. Most foods and drinks sold in our grocery stores are UPF. Group 4 is a very large and diverse group of foods, including:

- sliced bread (all non-whole grain bread), bagels of all kinds
- Popular Margarines: Country Crock, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!, and Blue Bonnet.
- breakfast cereals of all kinds except single ingredient ones such as rolled oats, puffed wheat, puffed corn
- pre-packaged or canned meals such as Stouffer's, Marie Calendar, Healthy Choice, Hungry-Man, Lean Cuisine, Trader Joe's
- distilled alcohol such as Vodka, Whiskey, Tequila
- sausages, hot dogs, brats, jerky, pepperoni, spam, ham, bacon, oil packed tuna w salt, canned sardines
- chicken nuggets and other fast foods and drinks
- spaghetti sauces such as Prego, RAO's, Bertollini
- flavored yoghurts and ice-cream
- all kinds of chips and crunchy snacks

- cookies, candy bars, nearly all energy bars except Lara bars
- All kinds of crackers
- Biscuits of all kinds, corn bread
- cakes
- sweet candies
- chocolates
- all sweetened beverages, energy and sports drinks
- Alcohol containing spritzers, tea and other drinks
- Nearly all store-bought salad dressings
- Most fast food and traditional restaurant foods
- Non whole wheat pasta