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**Foods That Burn Fat,
Foods That Turn to Fat,
Part 1:**

FOODS THAT BURN FAT!



By Tom Venuto

“Foods That Burn Fat, Foods That Turn To Fat”

Part 1: Foods That Burn Fat

**By Tom Venuto, Author of
Burn The Fat, Feed The Muscle (BFFM)**

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Foods That Burn Fat, Foods That Turn to Fat

This recommended list of "fat-burning foods," also known in the Burn the Fat, Feed the Muscle (BFFM) program as "the terrific twelve," might be the most valuable resource you've ever laid your hands on. Although the possible variety in your food choices is nearly infinite, these twelve are the *staple foods* that should make up the foundation of your program. Variety is important, but these are the foods you can't go wrong with and the ones you'll keep coming back to time after time.

1. Oatmeal

If I could only choose one source of complex, starchy carbohydrates for a fat loss program, this would be it! Oatmeal is the one carbohydrate food that virtually 100% of all bodybuilders and fitness models eat on a daily basis. What makes it so great? Well, although it's a starchy carbohydrate, oatmeal has a nice balance between carbs, protein and good fat. A half a cup contains 3 grams of fat, 27 grams of carbs and 5 grams of protein. The low glycemic index, combined with the presence of protein and fat makes oatmeal a very slowly released carb – exactly what you're looking for when you want to get lean.

Make sure you choose the all-natural oats; either old-fashioned oats (such as Quaker) or the quick oats. Stay away from the sweetened and or flavored oatmeal packets. Oatmeal is delicious with natural (sugar free) applesauce and cinnamon. Or, try some crushed walnuts or flaxseeds in your morning oats, which will give your "porridge" a nice crunchy texture while adding those desirable "good fats" we all need. For a complete meal, try a couple scoops of Vanilla Praline flavored protein powder in your oatmeal. If you get tired of oatmeal, there are plenty of other cooked whole grain cereals in the "oatmeal family." Look in your local health food store (or a gourmet supermarket) for barley, wheat, triticale, rye, oat bran and flax cereals (or a multi grain combination of the above).

2. Yams (and sweet potatoes)

Right behind oatmeal, yams (and sweet potatoes) are probably my second favorite starchy carbohydrate. Flavorful, all-natural, low in calories, and packed with nutrients and antioxidants like beta-carotene, it's no wonder yams are a favorite carbohydrate among bodybuilders, fitness competitors and health-seekers alike. According to Brian Rowley, science editor for FLEX magazine, "Bodybuilders use yams when cutting bodyfat because they are low on the glycemic index. Waxy white

potatoes (boilers) are high on the glycemic index, so they make an excellent postworkout meal, but nothing compares with a yam the rest of the time.”

Although the glycemic index is a secondary factor when making carb choices on the BFFM program, if you’re carb sensitive or if you’re on a very strict diet (like a contest diet), then the glycemic index should be given more weight in your choices. Yams are one of the best. Sweet potatoes are not exactly the same thing as yams (they’re slightly higher on the glycemic index), but they’re otherwise similar, which also makes them good choices for fat burning diets. You can identify a yam by its darker orange color, pointier ends and unusual sizes/shapes. Combine a yam with a green veggie, a chicken breast, lean red meat or fish, and you’ve got yourself a perfect fat-burning, muscle building, metabolism boosting meal.

3. Potatoes (white or red)

Potatoes have earned an undeserved reputation as a food to avoid on a fat loss program. But think about it; Potatoes meet every criteria of a great carbohydrate: potatoes are a complex carb. They are all-natural. They contain fiber, vitamins and minerals. They are filling. They are low in calories. So why do people avoid them? One reason is because they confuse a dry potato with a loaded potato. Smother a potato with butter, sour cream and bacon bits and then you’ve got yourself a fattening, calorie-dense ensemble. Eat it dry or top it with Butter sprinkles, salsa or your favorite low fat, low calorie topping and you can’t go wrong.

Another reason people might avoid the potato is because they are using the glycemic index as their primary gauge for choosing carbohydrates. Potatoes are high on the glycemic index, which means they are absorbed as blood sugar very rapidly. What most people don’t realize however, is that when you eat your potato as a whole meal with your favorite lean protein, the glycemic index of the entire meal is much lower. Most people also don’t realize that some white potatoes are higher in the GI than others. Baking potatoes are higher in amylose, a slow releasing starch, so the glycemic index is lower. Russet potatoes are also moderate on the GI. Waxy potatoes or boilers are high GI foods. If you’re extremely carb sensitive or hypoglycemic, then you might want to eat more yams than white potatoes, but generally speaking, white potatoes make a superb addition to almost any fat burning diet. I personally eat white potatoes right up until the day of a bodybuilding contest and I have no difficulty reaching 3-4% body fat.

4. Brown Rice

Brown rice is another staple food of bodybuilders and you often see the “muscled ones” chowing down platefuls of rice, both in season and out of season (in smaller quantities during the “cutting-up” season). Prior to contests, bodybuilders sometimes reduce the amount of rice (starchy carbs) and add in more green veggies (fibrous carbs), but rice is a solid year round staple, as long as you keep your calories in check. Obviously, this means avoiding fried rice or other rice dishes that have added fat and calories. Steamed or boiled rice is the way to go.

Of the many types of rice, slow-cooked brown rice or basmati rice are your number one choices. Instant (pre-cooked) rice is fine when you’re in a crunch for time, but the instant rice digests much more quickly and is processed in the body more like a simple carbohydrate. The same goes for white rice, especially the sweet variety that’s usually served in Chinese and Asian restaurants (including sushi rolls). White rice is the processed version of brown rice. Although it’s still technically a starchy complex carbohydrate, the white rice burns faster and has been stripped of much of its nutritional value. When you’re on a very strict fat loss diet, stick with the slow-cooking brown rice for best results.

5. 100% whole wheat and whole grain products

The “baseline diet” can and should contain a wide variety of bread products with one condition: They must be made from 100% whole grains (and the label must say, “100% whole wheat” or “100% whole grain” as the first ingredient). White bread and anything made out of white flour is not allowed in any quantity on this program (except the occasional planned “cheat meal”). If you’re particularly carb-sensitive, then bread – even the whole wheat variety – is one of the first things to go.

A small handful of people – usually one in 200, depending on what source you listen to – have sensitivity to the gluten in the wheat. Gluten is a protein found in wheat products and, much like lactose intolerance from dairy products, gluten intolerance can cause digestive difficulties and bloating in certain individuals. Most competitive bodybuilders drop out all the pasta and bread products for the 12-16 week dieting period before a contest, then usually put them back in for off-season maintenance. On very strict fat loss diets, wheat and bread products are usually eliminated completely. Generally speaking, however, 100% whole wheat and other whole grains are perfectly acceptable additions to a healthy diet for long term body composition control, it just depends on how “strict” you want or need to be with your nutrition.

6. Green fibrous vegetables (broccoli, green beans, asparagus, lettuce, etc)

Fibrous carbs are your number one choice for fat burning carbohydrates. Green vegetables, also known as fibrous carbs, hardly contain any calories (they have a low calorie density). It's virtually impossible to overeat green vegetables. Eat them liberally and eat more of them late in the day. A diet of green vegetables combined with lean proteins is one of the best methods of getting lean as quickly as possible.

7. Fresh Fruit

Whole fruits are a fantastic, healthy food suitable for nearly any fat loss program. Although there are some "guru's" in the bodybuilding industry who claim, "fruit is fattening," this statement is somewhat misleading. It's true that a diet of mostly complex carbohydrate will give you better results than a diet of mostly simple carbohydrates, but that's not the same thing as saying "fruit is fattening." Although fruits are simple carbohydrates, they are *natural* simple carbohydrates. Most fruits are low in calories, low in carbohydrate grams (compared to starches) and high in fiber.

Some fruits such as raisins are extremely calorie dense and best avoided when you're on a strict fat loss program and your calorie allotment is small. Fruits like apples, peaches, grapefruits, and oranges, at only 60-80 calories apiece (or less), are a great addition to almost any nutritional plan. Just make sure the majority of your carbohydrates are of the complex type. An all-fruit or mostly fruit diet won't be as effective for fat loss as one that is mostly green fibrous carbohydrates with lean protein.

8. Skim milk & nonfat dairy products

"Dairy products" cover an entire category of foods including milk, cheese, yogurt, sugar free frozen yogurt, and cottage cheese. To make it on the BFFM "approved" list, a dairy product must be labeled "fat-free," "skim," or 1% lowfat. Whole milk dairy products are not allowed, as they are high in fat. Even 2% low fat milk is still 37.5% fat by calories.

Dairy products are a "combination food" – they contain carbohydrates *and* proteins. Because the protein found in dairy products is high quality, complete protein, a high protein dairy product can count as an exchange for a protein food. For example, you could have non-fat cottage cheese as a protein instead of a serving of lean meat. Non-fat cheese can also boost the protein content of a meal. Yogurt tends to have

less protein than cottage cheese, so a single container of yogurt wouldn't count as a full protein serving. In fact, yogurt would count more as a simple carbohydrate exchange than a protein (although, you could mix in a scoop of protein powder into your yogurt to make it "high-protein yogurt").

9. Chicken Breast (and Turkey Breast)

Chicken and turkey are probably the number one most popular protein sources among bodybuilders and fat loss seekers. Remove the skin and get the light meat found in the breasts. The thighs are higher in fat and calories. Naturally, your poultry should be broiled, grilled, or roasted and not fried.

Also, we're talking about the real bird here, not the sliced lunch meat you find at deli's or pre-packed in supermarkets. Lunch meats are processed proteins. Some nutritionists call them "fabricated foods" because they are made from a mix and poured into a mold before being cooked and wrapped. While these are acceptable occasionally, don't make them a staple in your regular daily diet. Lunch meats are loaded with sodium, preservatives, binders, fillers and other nasty chemicals that you don't want floating around in your body!

10. Egg whites

The name of the game in fat-burning, muscle-building nutrition is to eat a lean protein with every meal. With zero fat, egg whites are as lean as lean proteins get. Egg whites are right up there with chicken breasts as one of the top three lean proteins of choice for losing fat and gaining muscle. Eggs are a super-high quality protein. The problem with whole eggs is the high fat and calorie content. Fortunately, 100% of the fat is in the yolk, while the protein is split evenly between the yolk and the white. This doesn't mean you have to throw out all your yolks, but it does mean you should limit your yolks. I'd recommend one yolk for every six whites you eat. Just crack them open, and separate the yolk from the white using the edge of the shell. Or, even easier, simply use "Egg Beaters" or another packaged egg white product. There must be hundreds of ways to make eggs, so use your imagination: Omelets, frittatas, scrambled, fried (in nonstick spray), over easy, sunnyside up, hard-boiled or any other way you like them, use egg whites liberally!

11. Fish and shellfish

Many people complain about the lack of variety in a bodybuilding-style fat-burning diet, which typically has you eating egg whites, tuna and chicken day in, day out.

What most people don't eat enough of is fish and seafood. By using different types of fish and shellfish as protein sources, you can add an incredible amount of variety as well as getting those valuable good fats. Here is just a partial list of fish to consider: salmon, tuna, haddock, flounder, mackerel, trout, snapper, sea bass, swordfish, mahi mahi, perch, orange roughy, sole, Halibut, herring cod and catfish.

As with other meats, eat your fish baked, grilled or broiled and avoid fatty, high calorie sauces and butter. Most fish are very low in fat and high in protein. Some fish, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring and trout, are high in fat. However, because fish is so high in Omega 3 fatty acids, these fish can and should be used liberally. Shellfish have many of the benefits that fish have and it can add some variety to your diet if you're getting bored of egg whites and chicken. This category includes shrimp, crab, lobster, mussels, etc. By the way, when you're eating in restaurants, fish is a great choice, as long as you make sure there are no hidden bad fats or extra calories.

12. Lean red meat

Bodybuilders are quite famous for loving their red meat. Many bodybuilders believe that red meat helps muscle growth, and there may be much truth in that statement. Red meat is high in protein, B-12, iron and creatine. The problem with most cuts of red meat is the high fat content. However, not all cuts of red meat are the same. It's a mistake to label the entire red meat category as a no-no because of high fat content. If you carefully choose the leanest cuts possible and keep your portion sizes small, red meat can be a great addition to a fat burning program. For example, a 6 oz serving of lean, trimmed top round steak has only 9 grams of fat, while a 6 oz of untrimmed porterhouse has 37 grams of fat (and the 18 oz porterhouse you're often served in a steak house has over 100 grams of fat!)

About the Author:

Tom Venuto is a lifetime natural bodybuilder, personal trainer, gym owner, success coach, freelance writer and author of "[Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle](#)" (BFFM): Fat Burning Secrets of the World's Best Bodybuilders and Fitness Models. Tom has written over 160 articles and has been featured in IRONMAN magazine, Natural Bodybuilding, Muscular Development, Muscle-Zine, Olympian's News, Exercise for Men and Men's Exercise. Tom's informative and inspiring articles have been featured in literally dozens of websites and e-zines worldwide. You can visit Tom on the web at Fitness Renaissance (www.fitren.com) or www.burnthefat.com. You can subscribe to his monthly E-mail newsletter at www.fitren.com/listserv.cfm

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**Foods That Burn Fat,
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Part 2:**

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Part 2: Foods That Turn To Fat

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Foods That Turn To Fat

Part one of this special report listed the twelve foods that “burn fat.” This second installment in the series will teach you which foods “turn to fat.” One of the best ways to learn what you *should* eat is to learn what you *shouldn't* eat. Then, by a process of elimination, you'll be much more likely to eat the foods that will give you the best results.

In this report, you'll discover that the foods that “turn to fat” all tend to have certain things in common:

- X** High total calories
- X** High calorie density per unit of volume
- X** High total fat
- X** High in unhealthy saturated and trans fats
- X** High in refined sugar.
- X** Low in nutritional value (low nutrient density)
- X** Flavor enhancers, fillers and other chemicals
- X** Artificial colors and flavors
- X** High sodium

It only gets worse. Many of these fat and sugar filled “junk foods” have *negative* nutritional value. They subtract from the good you're doing when you pick the right foods. For example, anything high in white sugar is going to leach minerals from your body. None of the foods on this list should ever be eaten as a part of your regular daily diet. It's wise to allow yourself one or two cheat meals per week, but save the “junk foods” on this list for the *very occasional* cheat day. If and when you do eat them, make sure you continue to obey the law of calorie balance (too much of anything gets stored as fat and small amounts of bad foods usually won't get stored as fat)

1. Ice Cream

I'm sure a lot of people will be mad at me when they see their beloved ice cream as number one on the hit list of the foods that turn to fat, but here goes: Ice cream is Bad news with a capital B! Ice cream is loaded with fat, sugar and way more calories than you need; an evil fat-storing triad. Not to mention, the artificial colors, artificial flavors, preservatives, emulsifiers and stabilizers.

Now let's talk about the fat. One cup (that's a pretty small serving you know), contains approximately 350 calories and 20 grams of fat – mostly saturated. And that's just regular premium vanilla ice cream. A cup of Haagen Dasz Belgian Chocolate has 660 calories and 36 grams of fat. But that's nuthin! Ben & Jerrys has them all beat! A cup of wavy gravy ice cream has 660 calories and Gulp.... 48 grams of fat – 20 of them saturated!

There are so many delicious alternatives to ice cream like fruit sorbet or even sugar free, low fat frozen yogurt, it boggles the mind that more fitness conscious people don't make the switch. Are you a Ben & Jerry's freak? Skip the wavy gravy or chunky monkey and have the Cherry Garcia Yogurt instead (if you must)... it's only 340 calories and six grams of fat. Healthy Choice makes a Low fat chocolate mint chip ice cream with only 200 calories per cup and just four grams of fat. Best of all, Kemp's makes a sugar free non fat frozen yogurt that contains only 240 calories and zero grams of fat. It's made with skim milk and is sugar free.

You can have your ice cream and eat it too, you just have to watch your portion sizes, read labels, choose your brand carefully, and go with a reduced fat or even a fat free version. Usually I hear, "but it just doesn't taste the same." Maybe true, but if regular ice cream is a regular item in your weekly or daily menu, you can rest assured that a lot of those calories will be turning to fat.

2. Fried Foods

All fried foods are really BAD NEWS! (with all capitals!) Fried foods are harmful in more ways than one. First of all, they are high in calories and mostly fat. Take a McDonald's super size fries, for example. Polish off the whole batch and you've got yourself 610 calories and 29 grams of fat, 10 of them saturated. Large Burger King hash browns – 390 calories and 25 grams of fat, 15 of them saturated. KFC fried chicken breast (extra tasty crispy) – one serving alone sets you back 470 calories and 25 grams of fat.

Second, the type of fat is highly saturated and/or trans fat. Frying destroys essential fatty acids (EFA's) by twisting their molecules from the cis-configuration in which they're normally found to the unnatural trans shape. To make matters worse, shortening and margarines have replaced the lard that was traditionally used for frying. These contain large amounts of chemically altered trans fatty acids to begin with, so you get a double whammy of artery clogging, health destroying "funny fats."

According to Udo Erasmus, the world's foremost expert on fats, there is no such thing as safe frying. "Safe frying is a contradiction in terms," says Erasmus. "When foods turn brown, they have been burned. The nutrients in burned material have been destroyed. Proteins turn into carcinogenic acrolein. Starches and sugars are browned through molecular destruction. Fats and oils are turned to smoke by destruction of fatty acids and glycerol."

Folks, stay the heck away from anything fried! (By the way, did you know that "sauté" is the French word for "fry?")

3. Donuts and pastries

Like ice cream, doughnuts are one of the all time no-no's when body fat reduction and good health are your goals. Doughnuts contain that king of fat storing combinations: refined sugar and saturated fats.

A small plain or powdered donut contains about 170 calories and 10 grams of fat (by the way, that's over 50% fat by calories). Your larger donuts contain anywhere from 200 to 420 calories and up to 22 grams of fat – much of it saturated.

The flour in donuts, of course is white flour – stripped of any nutritional value with no trace of the original whole grain left intact. And heaps and heaps of sugar are added on top to add insult to injury.

Donuts also contain chemical agents designed to keep them soft, mono and diglycerides, propylene and glycol mono and diesters, coloring agents including FD & C yellow, number 5 and preservatives such as BHT and BHA.

If you want a chemical cocktail loaded with fat, sugar and calories, donuts fit the bill nicely. By the way, did you know they deep-fry those things? And one more thing; did you know a Cinnabon has 670 calories and 34 grams of fat? Stay away from Cinnabons, pastries, éclairs and anything else in the "donut family."

4. White sugar, Candy, Chocolate and sweets

One of the biggest misconceptions in weight loss is that carbohydrates make you fat. This is an incorrect statement. A correct statement would be; *refined* carbohydrates make you fat... and that means white sugar, candy and sweets. Of course, *calories* are the bottom line... it's not necessarily sugar that makes you fat, it's too many

calories that make you fat. But guess what? Refined carbs are incredibly *calorie dense*, making it extremely easy for you to eat too many calories.

Even if you could “get away with” eating sugar because your calories were below maintenance, you wouldn’t want to. You see, sugar is “empty calories.” No vitamins, no minerals, no fiber, no nothing... just calories.

Refined sugars wreak havoc with your blood sugar levels and they increase insulin levels, which can also increase fat storage and prevent stored fat from being released.

It only gets worse. Nancy Appleton, author of “Lick the sugar habit,” has compiled a list of over 100 reasons that sugar is disastrous to your health and fitness endeavors. Here’s a shortened version:

- 1) Refined sugar can be a contributing factor to gaining body fat
- 2) Refined sugar can increase the bad LDL cholesterol
- 3) Refined sugar can decrease the good HDL cholesterol
- 4) Refined sugar can increase triglycerides
- 5) Refined sugar can suppress your immune system
- 6) Refined sugar can deplete your body of important minerals
- 7) Refined sugar can contribute to the development of numerous types of cancer
- 8) Refined sugar can cause hypoglycemia
- 9) Refined sugar can decrease growth hormone
- 10) Refined sugar can contribute to diabetes
- 11) Refined sugar can cause food allergies
- 12) Refined sugar can increase serum insulin

If you made only one change to your nutritional habits today... that is, to reduce your sugar intake... the difference in your health, energy levels and body composition would absolutely blow your mind. Get the sugar out!

5. Soda

It was 1767 when British Scientist Joseph Priestly discovered how to carbonate water. Quite simply, pressurized carbon dioxide gas is pumped through the liquid and that’s what creates the bubbly fizz so many people have come to love.

Since then, soft drinks have become a multi-billion dollar industry all around the world. In fact, Coca Cola is one of the most valuable and recognized brands in the world. According to the Beverage Marketing Corporation, the total consumption of carbonated beverages in 2001 was 10.3 billion cases. The average person consumes... get a load of this... 55.7 gallons of the fizzy stuff every year. But what's good for the cola companies definitely isn't good for what ails you.

Soft drinks are mostly water, but the amount of sucrose and high fructose corn syrup used to sweeten regular soda is more than enough to do its share of damage.

We've already talked about the ills of sugar, but liquid sugar is even more insidious when it comes to throwing a wrench in your fat burning machinery. Several studies have shown that when you consume liquid calories, you tend *not* to compensate by cutting back on the food you eat. The result is that you drink excess calories *in addition to* all the food you normally eat.

Liquid calories of all types are best avoided on fat burning diets.

6. Fruit "drinks" and other sugar sweetened beverages

Ditto (same as for soda)... don't drink your calories, especially if they're full of sugar! And don't be fooled by the labels that say, "Contains real fruit juice." Do your homework and read the ingredients list. If you see sugar, sucrose, corn syrup or high fructose corn syrup on the label, STAY AWAY!

7. Bacon, Sausage

Bacon has almost become a standard feature in the typical American breakfast. Too bad! The Center for Science in the Public Interest says that Bacon and Sausage are one of the worst foods you could possibly eat. One strip of regular pork bacon has 130 calories and 13 grams of fat, five of them saturated. By the way, that's 93% fat by calories – Yikes!

Even if you choose turkey bacon, or a reduced fat bacon, you'd better check the label carefully. "Reduced fat" doesn't mean much. If the fat is reduced from 90% fat to 70% fat or even 50% fat, that's not much improvement.

Suppose you find a really, honestly lean bacon or bacon substitute. Still not a good choice. Why? Because it's a processed food. The same warning that goes for processed fats and processed carbohydrates go for processed meats. You're not

eating pure, real pork my friend! You're eating a "meat product" that contains some pork in a mix of fillers, sodium, sugar and nitrites that are used to cure the meats. Stay away from all fatty meats and all processed meats and stick with lean proteins like chicken breast, turkey, fish and egg whites. Your body will thank you.

8. White bread

The average American eats 54 pounds of bread each year. Most people think bread is fattening. This is largely due to the popularity of low carb diets. The problem is they're eating the *wrong kind* of bread. White bread is treated in the body the same way as white sugar. White bread is a refined carbohydrate with no nutritional value. Whole grain breads (100% wheat, rye, etc) are another story.

Some breads are made from 100% whole grains with all the vitamins, minerals and fiber left intact. Other breads are all or mostly refined white flour. These breads have been stripped of most of their nutrients. The milling and grinding of the whole grain reduces the particle size while increasing the calorie density and turns the whole grain (a complex carb) into a simple carb that's no better than pure sugar.

When proponents of low carb programs "flame" dieters for eating "too many carbohydrates," what they often fail to mention is that the problem is not carbohydrates per se; the problem is *refined* carbohydrates. What most people miss is the fact that refined carbohydrates include not only white sugar and its derivatives (like corn syrup), but also white flour as well.

That's right! This means that anything and everything made from white or enriched flour is a food that will more readily turn to fat! That includes, cereals, pretzels, bagels, breads, pitas, crackers and anything else made from white flour. If you're not sure whether a food is whole grain or not, simply read the ingredients list on the label. If the food is whole grain, then the first ingredient will say something like "100% whole wheat."

If you want to burn fat, give up the white flour completely and go with the grain – whole grain that is.

9. Potato Chips, Nachos, Corn Chips

In Robert Kennedy's book "Rock Hard, Supernutrition for bodybuilders," he wrote, "far too high sodium content makes potato chips almost lethal, especially if you are

predisposed to high blood pressure. One popular brand contains 680 milligrams of salt, compared to the 4 milligrams of sodium one finds in an average baked potato.”

Sodium’s not the only thing chips have against them. Let’s see... we’ve got lots of calories, tons of fat, flavor additives and the refined oils that are used to fry/cook these buggers. The potato chip is not even close to the nutritional value of the raw potato, sodium and fat notwithstanding. The nutritional value that was in the raw potato has literally been “fried right out.” What’s left is mostly calories from fat from the refined oil used in the cooking process.

Oh, by the way, Nachos and Dorito-type chips are on the out list too (sorry).

These days you can find fat free potato chips at a health food store, which are definitely an improvement, but keep one thing in mind: packaged and man made foods are NEVER as good as foods eaten the way they’re found in nature. Pretzels are better because you’re losing the fat, but since they’re made from white flour, pretzels are NOT as big of an improvement over potato chips as many people think they are.

10. Hot dogs, fast food burgers

Hamburgers and hot dogs are as American as Chevrolet, baseball and apple pie. Unfortunately, America’s love for fast food has turned it into one of the most obese and unhealthy countries in the world.

Out of the two, hamburgers are the lesser of the evils (but they’re still pretty evil). Hot dogs are not pure meat – they are a “meat product” consisting of some meat, mashed up with fillers, stabilizers, sodium, preservatives, artificial colors and artificial flavors. They’re a veritable mish-mash of chemicals and additives... a “fake food” so to speak. A three-ounce regular hot dog has 16 grams of fat – seven of them saturated.

If you simply must have a hot dog, these days, you can find low fat hot dogs or turkey dogs by companies such as Healthy Choice. However, keep in mind that all hot dogs – low fat or not – are processed meats. The same rule that applies to carbohydrates applies to proteins as well; that is: Natural foods are always better than refined foods. Stick with natural lean proteins like chicken breast and egg whites and avoid the refined and processed meats as much as possible.

Hamburgers, while they may be made from real meat, are made from some of the fattiest meat available. There's no such thing as "lean ground beef." Even the leanest beef is still relatively high in fat. Read the labels and do the math for yourself.

Oh, one last thing...The nitrites used to cure the hot dogs have been linked to cancer.

11. Cookies, cakes, pies

Cookies, cakes and pies fall into the same categories as donuts – fat and sugar joined at the hip (and they'll end up on *your* hips too, if you're not careful!) Just because they're baked and not fried doesn't mean they're any better.

Fat and sugar is the worst of all food combinations and they're both found in abundance in cookies, cakes and pies. They also harbor untold amounts of dangerous trans fatty acids.

Save the cake for once a year on your birthday (okay, maybe a slice of pumpkin pie for thanksgiving). The rest of the year, avoid these like the plague.

12. Sugary breakfast cereals

According to the book "Cerealizing America," by Scott Bruce and Bill Crawford, The cereal industry uses 816 million pounds of sugar per year. Americans buy 2.7 billion packages of breakfast cereal each year. If laid end to end, the empty cereal boxes from one year's consumption would stretch to the moon and back. 1.3 million advertisements for cereal aired on American television every year, or more than twenty-five hours of cereal advertising per day, at a cost of \$762 million for air time. Only automobile manufacturers spend more money on television advertising than the makers of breakfast cereal.

Most of the boxed cereals found in supermarkets contain large amounts of sugar and some contain more than 50% sugar (sugar smacks have 53% sugar). Cereal manufacturers are very clever in their marketing, making many cereals appear much more healthy than they appear by "fortifying" them with vitamins and minerals. Oh, lovely – you now have vitamin-fortified sugar!

Before you eat any cereal, read the ingredients list and see how high sugar appears on the ingredient list. Then check the "Nutrition facts" panel.

There are actually only a small handful of national commercially branded cereals that are made from whole grains and are sugar free. Shredded Wheat is one. If you shop

at a health food store instead of in your local supermarket, you are much more likely to find a healthy, whole grain, sugar free (or very low sugar) cereal. But watch out – some of the health food store boxed cereals are sweetened with fruit juice or fructose. Although this may be an improvement over refined white sugar, this can really skyrocket the calories.

Although there are some good boxed cereals available, you may find it interesting that bodybuilders and fitness models – among the leanest athletes in the world – almost never eat boxed cereal – even the better brands. Instead, they opt for unsweetened old fashioned oatmeal (not the flavored, sweetened packets). This might surprise you, but most commercial breakfast cereals, with their hidden sugars and clever marketing, are foods that turn to fat. Leave em on the shelf!

About the Author:

Tom Venuto is a lifetime natural bodybuilder, personal trainer, gym owner, success coach, freelance writer and author of "[Burn the Fat, Feed The Muscle](#)" (BFFM): Fat Burning Secrets of the World's Best Bodybuilders and Fitness Models. Tom has written over 160 articles and has been featured in IRONMAN magazine, Natural Bodybuilding, Muscular Development, Muscle-Zine, Olympian's News, Exercise for Men and Men's Exercise. Tom's informative and inspiring articles have been featured in literally dozens of websites and e-zines worldwide. You can visit Tom on the web at www.fitren.com or www.burnthefat.com. You can subscribe to his monthly E-mail newsletter at www.fitren.com/listserv.cfm