



# Ultra-processed foods and added sugars in the Chilean diet (2010)

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To assess the consumption of ultra-processed foods and analyse its association with the content of added sugars in the Chilean diet.

**Design:** Cross-sectional study of national dietary data obtained through 24 h recalls and classified into food groups according to the extent and purpose of food processing (NOVA classification).

**Setting:** Chile.

**Subjects:** A probabilistic sample of 4920 individuals (aged 2 years or above) studied in 2010 by a national dietary survey (Encuesta Nacional de Consumo Alimentario).

**Results:** Ultra-processed foods represented 28.6 (SE 0.5)% of total energy intake and 58.6 (SE 0.9)% of added sugars intake. The mean percentage of energy from added sugars increased from 7.7 (SE 0.3) to 19.7 (SE 0.5) % across quintiles of the dietary share of ultra-processed foods. After adjusting for several potential sociodemographic confounders, a 5 percentage point increase in the dietary share of ultra-processed foods determined a 1 percentage point increase in the dietary content of added sugars. Individuals in the highest quintile were three times more likely (OR = 2.9; 95% CI 2.4, 3.4) to exceed the 10% upper limit for added sugars recommended by the WHO compared with those in the lowest quintile, after adjusting for sociodemographic variables. This association was strongest among individuals aged 2–19 years (OR = 3.9; 95% CI 2.7, 5.9).

**Conclusions:** In Chile, ultra-processed foods are important contributors to total energy intake and to the consumption of added sugars. Actions aimed at limiting consumption of ultra-processed foods are being implemented as effective ways to achieve WHO dietary recommendations to limit added sugars and processed foods, especially for children and adolescents.

## Keywords

Chile  
Food processing  
Ultra-processed foods  
Energy intake  
Added sugars

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