

Objective

By the end of this lesson, the student will understand what toxic ingredients are commonly found in processed foods, why they can be harmful, and how to make healthier food choices by reading labels and selecting better alternatives.

Materials and Prep

- Paper and colored pencils or markers
- Access to a variety of processed food labels (these can be printed from online sources or collected from home)
- Handout with a list of common toxic ingredients to avoid
- Notebook for taking notes

Before starting the lesson, familiarize yourself with the common toxic ingredients found in processed foods, such as high fructose corn syrup, artificial colors, preservatives, and trans fats. Prepare the handout to provide to the student.

Activities

• Label Detective

The student will examine various processed food labels to identify toxic ingredients. They will create a chart listing the foods, their toxic ingredients, and healthier alternatives. This will help them practice recognizing harmful ingredients.

• Create a Healthy Snack

The student will brainstorm and create a recipe for a healthy snack using whole, fresh ingredients. They will draw their snack idea and write down the ingredients, emphasizing avoiding processed items.

• Ingredient Bingo

Using the handout of toxic ingredients, the student will create a bingo card with these ingredients. As they go through their food labels, they can mark off any ingredients they find on their card, making it a fun game!

Talking Points

- "Did you know that some ingredients in processed foods can be harmful to our health? Let's find out which ones to avoid!"
- "Toxic ingredients can cause health problems over time. It's important to know what's in our food!"
- "Reading food labels is like being a detective! You can uncover hidden ingredients that might not be good for you."
- "High fructose corn syrup is a sweetener that can lead to weight gain and other health issues. It's better to choose natural sugars like honey or maple syrup."
- "Artificial colors and preservatives can cause allergies and other health problems. Always look for natural alternatives!"
- "Trans fats are bad for your heart. Make sure to choose foods that say '0g trans fats' on the

label."

- "Eating whole foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains is a great way to avoid toxic ingredients!"
- "If you can't pronounce an ingredient, it might be best to avoid it! Stick to simple, natural ingredients."
- "Cooking at home allows you to control what goes into your food. It's fun and healthier!"
- "Making small changes in your diet can lead to big health improvements. Start by swapping one processed snack for a healthy one!"
- "Remember, you are what you eat! Choosing healthy foods helps you feel better and have more energy!"
- "Let's make a pact to be food detectives! We can help our friends and family eat better by sharing what we learn!"