



A Dietitian's Guide to Unpacking the Processed Food Panic with Elizabeth Ward, MS, RD (ep – 78)

If you follow health and nutrition conversations online, you've likely seen the debates about "processed" and "ultra-processed" foods. But what's grounded in science, and what's simply clickbait?

In this episode, Dr. Ginger is joined by fellow myth-buster, registered dietitian, and nutrition communicator Elizabeth (Liz) Ward to bring essential nuance back into the processed-food conversation. Together, they break down what these terms really mean, where modern classification systems like NOVA fall short, and why saying "no" to all processed foods can actually limit accessibility and overlook major public-health wins. From long ingredient lists to hard-to-pronounce additives, Liz and Ginger unpack the facts versus fear, and walk through everyday foods that are often labeled "good," "bad," or somewhere in between.

In this episode, we'll cover:

[00:00:00] What ultra-processed food research really shows

[00:01:50] Defining processed foods: from whole to ultra-processed

[00:02:52] The NOVA classification system explained

[00:05:46] How processing improves nutrition: fortification and public health

[00:08:35] Why some ultra-processed foods can still be nutritious

[00:11:29] Common food label myths and how to read ingredients wisely

[00:13:45] Access, convenience, and the role of processed foods in real life

[00:22:03] Final takeaways: moving beyond fear

About Dr. Ginger Hultin, DCN, RDN, CSO.

Ginger Hultin is an integrative, clinical dietitian and cancer nutrition specialist who received her Doctorate in Clinical Nutrition from the University of North Florida. She received her master's degree from Bastyr University, where she currently serves as adjunct faculty teaching clinical nutrition. She has been in practice for over 10 years using a personalized, holistic nutrition approach. She runs a full-time virtual private practice, Ginger Hultin Nutrition where she helps clients with complex health problems improve their health through nutrition. In addition to being the host of The Good Clean Nutrition Podcast, she is an author of two books, Anti-inflammatory Diet Meal Prep and the How to Eat to Beat Disease Cookbook.

Connect with Dr. Ginger Hultin on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) or her [website](#).

About Elizabeth Ward, MS, RD.

Elizabeth Ward is a registered dietitian, author, nutrition consultant, and mother of three based in the Boston area. For nine years, she served as a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, where she was widely recognized for her ability to translate science into relatable, evidence-based advice for the public. Her media appearances include CNN, U.S. News & World Report, The New York Times, and The Boston Globe, as well as national television segments on The Today Show, The Dr. Oz Show, and a six-year run as a regular guest on Boston 25's Morning News. Ward is especially passionate about helping people make realistic, practical food choices that support health while accommodating busy lifestyles.

Connect with Elizabeth Ward on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) or [Website](#).

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