

Top 20 Food Additives to Avoid

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- 1. Allura Red AC:** Food coloring in snacks, sauces, preserves, soups, wine, cider, etc. Avoid if you suffer from asthma, rhinitis (including hayfever), or urticaria (hives).
- 2. Amaranth:** Food coloring in wine, spirits, fish roe. Banned in the U.S.. Avoid if you suffer from asthma, rhinitis, urticaria or other allergies.
- 3. Aspartame:** Sweetener in snacks, sweets, alcohol, desserts, ~diet" foods. May affect people with PKU (phenylketonuria). Recent reports show possibility of headaches, blindness, and seizures with long-term high doses of aspartame.
- 4. Benzoic acid:** Preservative in many foods, including drinks, low sugar products, cereals, meat products. Can temporarily inhibit the function of digestive enzymes. May deplete glycine levels. Avoid if you suffer from asthma, rhinitis, urticaria or other allergies.
- 4. Brilliant Black BN:** In drinks, sauces, snacks, wines, cheese, etc. Avoid if you suffer from asthma, rhinitis, urticaria, or other allergies.
- 5. Butylated Hydroxy-anisole:** Preservative, particularly in fat-containing foods, confectionery, meats. The International Agency for Research on Cancer says BHA is possibly carcinogenic to humans. BHA also interacts with nitrites to form chemicals known to cause changes in the DNA of cells.
- 6. Calcium benzoate:** Preservative in many foods, including drinks, low-sugar products, cereals, meat products. Can temporarily inhibit function of digestive enzymes and may deplete levels of the amino acid glycine. Should be avoided by those with hay fever, hives, and asthma.
- 7. Calcium sulphite:** Preservative in a vast array of foods-from burgers to biscuits, from frozen mushrooms to horseradish. Used to make old produce look fresh. In the U.S., sulphites are banned from many foods, including meat. They can cause bronchial problems, flushing, low blood pressure, tingling, and anaphylactic shock. The International Labour Organization says avoid them if you suffer from bronchial asthma, cardiovascular or respiratory problems and emphysema.
- 8. Monosodium glutamate (MSG):** Flavor enhancer. Has been known to cause pressure on the head, seizures, chest pains, headache, nausea, burning sensations, and tightness of face. Many baby food producers have stopped adding MSG to their products.
- 9. Ponceau 4R, Conchineal, Red A:** Food coloring. People who suffer from asthma, rhinitis or urticaria may find their symptoms become worse following consumption of foods containing this coloring.
- 10. Potassium benzoate:** See calcium benzoate.
- 11. Potassium nitrate:** Preservative in cured meats and canned meat products. It can lower the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood; it may combine with other substances to form nitrosamines, which are carcinogenic; and it may have an atrophying effect on the adrenal gland.

12. Propyl p-hydroxybenzoate, propylparaben, and paraben: Preservative in cereals, snacks, pate, meat products, confectionery. Parabens have been identified as the cause of chronic dermatitis in numerous instances.

13. Saccharin & its Na, K and Ca salts: Sweetener in diet, and no-sugar products. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has concluded that saccharin is possibly carcinogenic to humans.

14. Sodium metabisulphite: Preservative and antioxidant. May provoke life-threatening asthma.

15. Sodium sulphite: Preservative used in wine-making and other processed foods. Sulphites have been associated with triggering asthma attacks. Most asthmatics are sensitive to sulphites in food.

16. Stannous chloride (tin): Antioxidant and color-retention agent in canned and bottled foods, fruit juices. Acute poisoning has been reported from ingestion of fruit juices containing concentrations of tin greater than 250 mg per liter.

17. Sulphur dioxide: Preservative. Sulphur dioxide reacts with a wide range of substances found in food, including various essential vitamins, minerals, enzymes and essential fatty acids. Adverse reactions: bronchial problems particularly in those prone to asthma, hypotension (low blood pressure), flushing tingling sensations or anaphylactic shock. International Labour Organization says to avoid E220 if you suffer from conjunctivitis, bronchitis, emphysema, bronchial asthma, or cardiovascular disease.

18. Sunset Yellow FCF, Orange Yellow S: Food coloring. Some animal studies have indicated growth retardation and severe weight loss. People with asthma, rhinitis, or urticaria should avoid this product.

19. Tartrazine: Yellow food coloring. May cause allergic reactions and asthmatic attacks and has been implicated in bouts of hyperactivity disorder in children. Those who suffer from asthma, rhinitis and urticaria may find symptoms worsen after consumption.

20. Pesticides: With today's chemical farming, even the old adage that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" must be questioned. For the caterpillar, one brief journey across the average apple is enough to kill it. But what about us? According to the World Health Organization, there were three million cases of severe pesticide poisoning and 20,000 deaths globally in 1996. A survey by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries found that 89% to 99% of all fresh fruit, cereals, and vegetables are sprayed with pesticides! Some fruits-particularly strawberries, raspberries, grapes, and tomatoes had measurable levels of at least six different pesticides! More recent concerns deal with the level of chemicals in carrots and lettuce. In 1994, a survey of carrots found some to have levels 25 times higher than the safety limit. In 1995, 10% of lettuces tested had levels in excess of the safety limit.

Food Additives

Chemicals are purposely added to food to change its color, preserve it, prevent rancidity, keep fats emulsified, and foods stable. Most of the chemicals are synthetic compounds, some with known negative health effects. But more importantly, we don't really know what the long-term consequences of consuming such large amounts of additives are. It is therefore best to avoid all additives, with a few notable exceptions. Since foods without preservatives are more likely to spoil, it's important to buy fresh produce and consume it relatively quickly. However, there are some additives you don't need to avoid:

Colors: vitamin B2, carotene, vitamin A

Emulsifiers: lecithin

Antioxidants: vitamin C, tocopherols like vitamin E

Stabilizers: niacin, pectin

