

FOOD ADDITIVES

More than [3,000 food additives](#) -- preservatives, flavorings, colors and other ingredients -- are added to foods in the United States. While each of these substances are legal to use, whether or not they are entirely safe for long-term consumption -- by themselves or in combination -- is a different story altogether.

And when you consider that 90 percent of the money Americans spend on food goes toward processed foods that are loaded with these additives, you get an idea of just how many toxins you may be polluting in your body with.

When foods are processed not only are valuable nutrients lost and fibers removed, but the texture, natural variation and flavors are lost also. After processing, what's actually left behind is a bland, uninteresting "pseudo-food"

At this point, food manufacturers must add back in the nutrients, flavor, color and texture to processed foods in order to make them palatable, and this is why they become loaded with food additives.

Many Food Additives Increase Your Risk of Cancer

Nine of the 12 food additives listed above have been linked to an increased risk of cancer. These include:

1. Sodium Nitrate (also called Sodium Nitrite)
2. BHA and BHT
3. Propyl Gallate
4. Trans Fats
6. Aspartame
7. Acesulfame-K
8. Food Colorings (Blue 1, 2, Red 3, Green 3, Yellow 6)
9. Potassium Bromate

Please understand that these additives are in countless products from baked goods and chewing gum to chicken soup base, cereal, luncheon meats, vegetable oils and potato chips.

If you eat a highly processed food diet, you are therefore potentially exposing yourself to cancer-causing toxins at every meal!

Food Additives May Mimic Your Hormones

A recent analysis published in the journal *Chemical Research in Toxicology* found [31 potential estrogen-mimicking food additives](#) (called xenoestrogens) after searching a food additive database of 1,500 substances.

These xenoestrogens have been linked to a range of human health effects, including reduced sperm counts in men and increased risk of breast cancer in women.

Among the xenoestrogens revealed were propyl gallate, which acts as an antagonist, and 4-hexylresorcinol, which is a potent transactivator. Antagonists block the binding of an agent at a receptor molecule, and transactivators increase the rate of gene expression. In conclusion the authors' state:

“Some caution should be issued for the use of propyl gallate and 4-hexylresorcinol as food additives.”

Propyl gallate is frequently used in conjunction with BHA and BHT, which come with their own set of health hazards. These two additives also keep fats and oils from going rancid and are commonly used in processed food products such as cereals and potato chips, even though some studies have found they too, cause cancer in rats.

The other food additive mentioned above, 4-hexylresorcinol, is commonly used as an anti-browning agent in shrimp and other shellfish.

Your Behavior and Mood May be Impacted Too

According to Dr. Russell Blaylock, high sugar content and starchy carbohydrates (common in processed foods) lead to excessive insulin release, which in turn leads to falling blood sugar levels, or hypoglycemia. Hypoglycemia causes your brain to secrete glutamate in levels that can cause agitation, depression, anger, anxiety, panic attacks and an increase in suicide risk.

The glutamate that causes this is identical to the [flavor-enhancing monosodium glutamate \(MSG\)](#) and its chemical cousins, which are found in thousands of food products, further exacerbating the problem.

Further, a study published in the journal *The Lancet* concluded that a variety of common food dyes, and the [preservative sodium benzoate](#) -- found in many soft drinks, fruit juices and

salad dressings -- cause some children to become measurably more hyperactive and distractible.

The study also found that the E-numbered food dyes (such as tartrazine (E102), ponceau 4R (E124), sunset yellow (E110), carmoisine (E122), quinoline yellow (E104) and allura red AC (E129) do as much damage to children's brains as lead in gasoline, resulting in a significant reduction in IQ.

The results of this study have prompted the British Food Standards Agency (FSA) to issue an immediate advisory to parents, warning them to limit their children's intake of additives if they notice an effect on behavior. They're also advising the food industry to voluntarily remove the six food dyes named in the study by the end of 2009, and replace them with natural alternatives if possible.

The United States, however, has not followed suit in issuing any similar warnings to American parents.

How to Avoid Food Additives

One of the best ways to avoid food additives is to cut way back on the processed foods in your diet and instead focus your meals on whole foods. If you do eat processed foods, choose organic varieties and make sure to read the label and avoid foods that contain numerous additives.

By keeping your diet as pure as possible, you're giving your body the nutrients it needs without all of the added toxins it definitely doesn't.

Ideally you, your spouse, or someone you pay would freshly prepare your food and you can avoid processed foods. Also recognize that when you eat out at a restaurant you are losing virtually all of the control of the quality of your food.

While this is typically socially enjoyable, tasty, and easier than preparing your own food, it frequently results in you exchanging convenience for your health.