

Common Food Additives to Avoid

Additive	Common Sources	Reported Health Effects
Aspartame	Diet and "sugar-free" soft drinks and foods, breakfast cereals, instant desserts, chewing gum, candy, snack foods, fruit spreads, salad dressings	Headaches, nausea, vertigo, insomnia, numbness, blurred vision, memory loss, depression, personality changes, hyperactivity, seizures, rashes, anxiety, muscle cramping and joint pain, energy loss and hearing loss
Benzoic acid	Fruit juices, soft drinks, jams, pickles, tomato ketchup	Allergic reactions such as red eyes, skin rashes and asthma, as well as behavioural problems, stomach upsets and water retention
BHA and BHT (butylated hydroxyanisole and butylated hydroxytoluene)	Oils, margarine, shortening, dried breakfast cereals, dehydrated potato products, chewing gum, citrus oil flavours. "BHA or BHT in packaging only" is a misleading phrase, as the chemicals can migrate onto the food itself.	Skin blisters, exhaustion, extreme weakness, tightness in the chest, tingling sensations, swelling of lips and tongue and difficulty breathing
MSG (monosodium glutamate)	Thousands of processed foods, Chinese food	Burning sensation in the back of the neck and in the forearms, tightness of the chest, headaches difficulty breathing, blue-tinged skin, loss of consciousness
Nitrates/nitrites (Sodium/potassium nitrate, sodium/potassium nitrate)	Bacon, ham, wieners, sausage, salami	Nitrites in large amounts is known to be toxic and has been reported as the cause of numerous deaths

Hard to Swallow: The Truth About Food Additives, by Doris Sarjeant and Karen Evans (alive Books, 1999)