



blending science & nature

Dr. Julia Gonen, N.D.
7 hate'ena street
bnei atarot 60991
p: 050.933.6004
e: julia@gaiiaclinic.com

www.gaiiaclinic.com

Food Additives & Safety

Red Dye No. 3 – which is sometimes added to ice cream, jams, pickles, liqueurs, ketchup and smoked fish – was banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 1990 after studies linked it to cancer in animals. It is still permitted in Canada.

Are there any other concerns with food additives?

Some studies have linked some food additives to hyperactivity in children. A recent British study found that children without a history of any hyperactive disorder showed varying degrees of hyperactivity after consuming fruit drinks with various levels of additives. Those additives included:

- **Sodium benzoate**, a preservative used to extend shelf-life of food and drinks. It's common in pickles and sauces.
- **Tartrazine**, a yellow food dye used in ice cream, soft drinks and fish sticks. It is a sodium salt and contains more salt than the human body can handle. Besides hyperactivity, research has linked it to asthma, skin rashes, and migraines. This product is banned in Norway and Austria.
- **Quinoline yellow**, a yellow dye used in soft drinks, cosmetics and medications. This additive is banned in Australia, Japan, Norway and the United States.
- **Sunset yellow**, a dye used in yogurts and sweets. This product is banned in Norway and Finland.
- **Carmoisine**, a coal tar derivative used in sweets and yogurts. It has been banned by Canada, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the United States.
- **Allura red**, a dye used in soft drinks and bubble gum. This additive was introduced in the early 1980s to replace Amaranth, a dye that was banned by the U.S. FDA and is only allowed in France and Italy in the production of caviar. Allura red is banned in Denmark, Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria and Norway.

What are some of the other food additives that have raised concerns?

Some people report sensitivity to monosodium glutamate. Some MSG-intolerant people can develop MSG symptom complex, which is characterized by one of more of the following:

- A burning sensation in the back of the neck, forearms and chest.
- A numbness in the back of the neck, radiating to the arms and back.
- A tingling, warmth and weakness in the face, temples, upper back, neck and arms.
- Facial pressure or tightness.
- Chest pain.
- Headache.
- Nausea.
- A rapid heartbeat.
- Bronchospasm (difficulty breathing) in MSG-intolerant people with asthma.
- Drowsiness.

(Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration)

But for the vast majority of people, MSG has not been determined to be a risk. However MSG *is* considered an excitotoxin – meaning that it has an excitatory effect on the brain and should be completely avoided in people who suffer from any neurologic conditions (depression, bipolar, ADHD, Autism etc...).



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Sulphites are also used to maintain food colour and prolong shelf-life, prevent the growth of micro-organisms, and to maintain the potency of certain medications. They are also one of the nine most common food products that cause severe allergic reactions.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canadian Food Inspection Agency
Food Safety Network
Food and Drug Administration (U.S.)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Codex Alimentarius Commission
WHO Food Safety Program
OurFood.com