

Below is a list of 25 food additives often cited by most consumer advocacy groups and public health organizations as potentially problematic or “dangerous” due to their possible health impacts or the processes by which they are made. Each entry includes:

1. Additive Name
2. Where It’s Commonly Found
3. How It’s Made (Brief Description)
4. Possible Health Effects

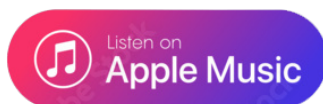
*Note: The scientific consensus on the safety of these additives can vary. Some are banned or more strictly regulated outside the U.S., while others are classified as “Generally Recognized As Safe” (GRAS) by the FDA. Always consult up-to-date research, reputable sources, and healthcare professionals when making dietary decisions.*

## 1. High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)

- **Commonly Found In:** Sweetened beverages (sodas, fruit drinks), baked goods, cereals, condiments like ketchup.
- **How It’s Made:** Corn starch is enzymatically broken down into glucose, then part of that glucose is converted to fructose using enzymes such as glucose isomerase.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Linked to obesity, insulin resistance, and other metabolic issues when consumed in excess.

## 2. Partially Hydrogenated Oils (Trans Fats)

- **Commonly Found In:** Fried fast foods, some margarine spreads, baked goods (pastries, cookies, crackers) that still use older formulations.
- **How It’s Made:** Vegetable oils are chemically treated with hydrogen gas under high pressure, often using a metal catalyst (e.g., nickel), which turns liquid oil into a semi-solid.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Associated with an increased risk of heart disease, higher “bad” LDL cholesterol, and lower “good” HDL cholesterol.



### 3. Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)

- **Commonly Found In:** Seasoning blends, soups, frozen foods, restaurant foods, snack chips.
- **How It's Made:** Typically via a fermentation process using bacteria, sugar beet or sugar cane molasses, or starches that produce glutamic acid; sodium is then added.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Some people report headaches, flushing, or other sensitivity reactions (often called “MSG symptom complex”), though research is mixed. Large amounts of sodium can also contribute to hypertension in sensitive individuals.

### 4. Sodium Nitrite / Sodium Nitrate

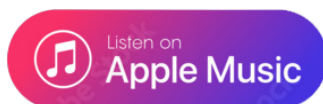
- **Commonly Found In:** Processed meats (bacon, ham, hot dogs, deli meats).
- **How It's Made:** Industrial chemical processes neutralizing nitrous/nitric acid with sodium hydroxide or sodium carbonate.
- **Possible Health Effects:** At high temperatures or under certain conditions, can form nitrosamines—compounds linked to an increased cancer risk.

### 5. Artificial Food Dyes (e.g., Red 40, Yellow 5, Blue 1)

- **Commonly Found In:** Candies, sodas, sports drinks, brightly colored cereals, frosting, snacks.
- **How It's Made:** Often derived from petroleum (coal tar or oil) through multi-step chemical processes to isolate and stabilize pigments.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Linked (in some studies) to hyperactivity in children; some dyes have been associated with allergic reactions or sensitivities.

### 6. Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) and Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)

- **Commonly Found In:** Cereals, snack foods, chewing gum, oils, packaged baked goods.
- **How It's Made:** Synthetic antioxidants produced via chemical reactions using phenol derivatives (in the case of BHT) and isobutylene (for BHA).
- **Possible Health Effects:** Animal studies have raised concerns over potential carcinogenicity; some regulatory bodies limit or require labeling for these antioxidants.



## 7. Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO)

- **Commonly Found In:** Some citrus-flavored soft drinks (though many brands have removed it in recent years).
- **How It's Made:** Vegetable oil (often soybean oil) is bonded with bromine atoms to increase the oil's density so it stays suspended in certain beverages.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Excessive consumption has been linked to neurological impairment, skin lesions, and potential reproductive toxicity in animal studies.

## 8. Potassium Bromate

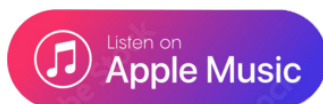
- **Commonly Found In:** Flour (especially used in bread-making to strengthen dough).
- **How It's Made:** Created industrially through the reaction of bromic acid with potassium carbonate.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Classified as a possible carcinogen; banned in many countries outside the U.S. but still allowed in limited amounts in some American flours.

## 9. Propyl Gallate

- **Commonly Found In:** Processed meats, chewing gum, soup bases, some oils, and snack foods to preserve fats.
- **How It's Made:** Chemically synthesized by esterifying gallic acid (from plants) with propanol.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Some studies suggest potential endocrine disruption and possible links to cancer in animals, though human data is less conclusive.

## 10. Sodium Benzoate

- **Commonly Found In:** Carbonated drinks, syrups, salad dressings, jams, pickles.
- **How It's Made:** Produced by neutralizing benzoic acid with sodium hydroxide. Benzoic acid often comes from synthetic chemical processes.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Can form benzene (a known carcinogen) when combined with vitamin C (ascorbic acid), especially under heat or light.



## 11. TBHQ (Tertiary Butylhydroquinone)

- **Commonly Found In:** Processed snacks, fast foods, frozen fish products, some cooking oils.
- **How It's Made:** Synthetic preservative produced from hydroquinone (an industrial chemical) via butylation.
- **Possible Health Effects:** High-dose animal studies show potential for liver enlargement, neurotoxicity, and increased tumor risk.

## 12. Polysorbate 80

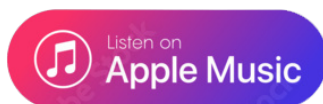
- **Commonly Found In:** Ice cream, some baked goods, dessert toppings, chewing gum.
- **How It's Made:** Produced by reacting sorbitol and fatty acids (often from vegetable oils) with ethylene oxide.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Some research links high consumption to gut microbiome disruptions or inflammation; also potential allergic reactions.

## 13. Propylene Glycol

- **Commonly Found In:** Frostings, icings, salad dressings, certain flavored beverages.
- **How It's Made:** Derived from propylene oxide (petrochemical); used as a humectant, solvent, and preservative.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Generally recognized as safe in small amounts, though high doses have caused kidney issues in rare cases; can cause irritation or allergic reactions in some individuals.

## 14. Azodicarbonamide (ADA)

- **Commonly Found In:** Bread dough conditioners, baked goods, some fast-food buns.
- **How It's Made:** Created through industrial synthesis of hydrazine derivatives; acts as a blowing agent in plastics (like yoga mats) and a flour-bleaching agent in food.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Can break down into semicarbazide and urethane, which have shown carcinogenic properties in animal studies; banned in Europe and Australia.



## 15. Sucralose

- **Commonly Found In:** “Diet” or “sugar-free” beverages, baked goods, frozen desserts, chewing gum.
- **How It’s Made:** Made by substituting three hydrogen-oxygen groups on a sucrose molecule with chlorine atoms.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Generally recognized as safe by the FDA, but some studies suggest it may alter gut bacteria and impact insulin response.

## 16. Acesulfame Potassium (Acesulfame-K)

- **Commonly Found In:** Sugar-free sodas, protein shakes, candies, tabletop sweeteners.
- **How It’s Made:** Produced by combining organic acid derivatives (e.g., acetoacetamide) with potassium.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Some animal studies point to possible effects on thyroid function, though evidence is inconclusive in humans.

## 17. Artificial Flavors

- **Commonly Found In:** Virtually any processed food—candies, chips, boxed meals, sodas, cereals.
- **How It’s Made:** Laboratory-created chemical compounds designed to mimic natural flavors.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Vary widely depending on the specific chemicals used; some may trigger sensitivities or allergic reactions.

## 18. Carrageenan

- **Commonly Found In:** Dairy-alternative beverages (almond, soy, coconut milks), ice cream, cottage cheese, processed meats.
- **How It’s Made:** Extracted from red seaweed (Irish moss) through alkali processing and refinement.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Some research links it to gastrointestinal inflammation and discomfort; degraded forms can be problematic in animal studies.



## 19. Titanium Dioxide

- **Commonly Found In:** Some white-colored powdered foods (frosting, coffee creamers), candy coatings, chewing gum.
- **How It's Made:** Refined from naturally occurring titanium ores (e.g., ilmenite), then processed to remove impurities and produce a bright white powder.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Inhalation (industrial exposure) is linked to lung cancer in animals; the effect from dietary use is less clear but has led some jurisdictions to ban it in food.

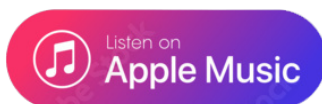
## 20. Sodium Aluminum Phosphate (SALP) / Other Aluminum Additives

- **Commonly Found In:** Baked goods, pancake mixes, processed cheese products, dough enhancers.
- **How It's Made:** Industrial reaction between sodium hydroxide/aluminum compounds and phosphoric acid.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Concern over aluminum accumulation in the body potentially affecting the nervous system. Some studies link high levels of dietary aluminum to neurodegenerative diseases, though causal evidence is not conclusive.

## 21. Potassium Sorbate

- **Commonly Found In:** Cheeses, yogurt, baked goods, wine, and dried meats to prevent mold and yeast growth.
- **How It's Made:** Synthetic compound formed by neutralizing sorbic acid (which can be derived from the berries of the rowan tree or made synthetically) with potassium hydroxide.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Generally recognized as safe in moderate quantities, but can cause allergies or skin/eye irritations in sensitive individuals.

## 22. Sulfites (e.g., Sodium Sulfite, Sodium Bisulfite)



- **Commonly Found In:** Dried fruits, wine, some condiments, pickled foods.
- **How It's Made:** Industrially produced from sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) gas, which is dissolved or reacted with bases like sodium hydroxide or potassium hydroxide.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Can trigger severe asthmatic or allergic reactions in sulfite-sensitive individuals; must be labeled if above certain levels.

## 23. Polydextrose

- **Commonly Found In:** Reduced-calorie or “light” foods, baked goods, desserts, candies as a bulking agent and sugar replacer.
- **How It's Made:** Synthesized from dextrose (glucose), sorbitol, and citric acid via a vacuum-based, high-temperature process that polymerizes glucose.
- **Possible Health Effects:** May cause bloating, gas, or digestive discomfort in large amounts.

## 24. Carrageenan “Sister” Gums (e.g., Xanthan Gum in Some Contexts)

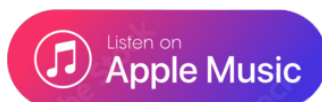
- **Commonly Found In:** Salad dressings, sauces, gluten-free baked goods, ice creams.
- **How It's Made:** Often produced by fermenting sugars (from corn, soy, wheat) with specific bacteria (e.g., *Xanthomonas campestris* for xanthan gum).
- **Possible Health Effects:** Generally considered safe, but some people experience gastrointestinal discomfort or bloating; allergenic potential depends on source (especially if from GMO corn/soy).

## 25. Calcium Disodium EDTA (Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid)

- **Commonly Found In:** Canned foods (beans, vegetables), mayonnaise, salad dressings, some soft drinks to stabilize color, flavor, and prevent oxidation.
- **How It's Made:** Synthesized by reacting ethylenediamine, formaldehyde, and sodium cyanide under controlled conditions.
- **Possible Health Effects:** Can cause mineral depletion over time if consumed in very high quantities (it “chelates,” or binds, metal ions); generally recognized as safe but can occasionally cause digestive discomfort or allergic reactions.

### Sources & Further Reading

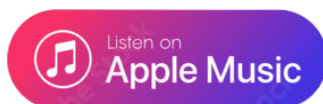
- U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) GRAS Notices



# Faith at the Table

- International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) Monographs
- World Health Organization (WHO) Food Additive Evaluations
- Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) Food Safety Reports

Always remember, moderation and balance are key. If you have specific health concerns, consult a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian who can offer personalized guidance.



[FaithattheTable.com](https://FaithattheTable.com)