

What's in your dinner today?

In the fast paced world of "eat and run" there has been a trend for the food industry companies to make foods which require little effort or time.

Most of these prepared or semi-prepared meals in a box contain preservatives, colorings and other additives which make things like 'fettuccini alfredo' taste better and last for years in the cupboard. Unfortunately many of these additives may have serious **side effects** that consumers should be aware of. Here is a summary of some of the more common preservatives in foods.

Aspartame (artificial sweetener, Equal or Nutra-Sweet)

Aspartame is used as a sugar substitute in many "diet" drinks and sweets. Its made of amino acids, methanol (a known poison) and phenylalanine.

Effects on the body may include dizziness, headaches, hallucinations, epileptic seizures and menstrual problems. Aspartame is found in "diet" foods and drinks, "sugarless" products such as gum and low-calorie frozen desserts.

BHA and BHT (Butylated Hydroxyanisole and Butylated Hydroxytoluene)

BHA and BHT keep foods containing oils and fats from going rancid. The World Health Organization considers them carcinogens. BHA and BHT are not necessary in foods and can be avoided by safer chemicals like Vitamin E. These additives are found in cereal packaging, potato chips, cracker packaging (Christie Brand Triscuit Crackers) and Quaker Granola Bars.

Colorings (Blue 1 and 2; Red 2,3 and 40; Yellow 5 and 6)

Red 3 has caused thyroid tumors in rats, according to the FDA, which has recommended that the coloring be banned. Yellow 5 has been known to cause mild allergies in aspirin sensitive people. Yellow 6 may have links to cancer and tumors of the adrenal gland and kidney and may also cause allergic reaction. Most food dyes are found in junk food, candies, Kraft Dinner and soft drinks. Maraschino cherries, found in fruit cocktails, contain Red 3.

MSG (Monosodium Glutamate)

MSG is an amino acid that brings out the flavor by activating taste buds, allowing food producers to reduce the amount of real flavorings or ingredients, making it cheaper to produce. Studies have shown that some people are allergic to MSG.

Reactions can include headaches, nausea, burning sensations in the back of the neck, wheezing and difficulty breathing, all of which are increased in the situation of an allergy. MSG is not hard to find. Many oriental and non-oriental restaurants use it and it's commonly found in soups (Campbell's uses it frequently), salad dressings, chips, frozen dinners, Lipton's pastas, and HVP (hydrolyzed vegetable protein). MSG has been proven to be a NEUROTOXIN: That means that it causes NERVE DEATH!!!