

Sulfites

The discussion of Sulfites has become popular among many of us who suffer from allergies and/or sensitivities to additives in our food.

What is a Sulfite?

A sulfite is a chemical compound generally used as a preservative which can cause some people to have mild to moderate or even severe reactions. Although no foods have a high concentration of sulfites, when combined and consumed on a regular basis, individuals can have moderate to severe reactions to the chemical.

If Harmful Why Are They Used?

In general, sulfites are used as a preservative. They assist in keeping harmful bacteria or fungus from growing in the food products that we consume. Sulfites are used in wine and dried food, acting as an antioxidant to prevent them from turning a brown color. In wine, sulfites also prevent wine from turning into vinegar. They are used agriculturally in many ways to extend the shelf life of products. While most governments have placed a ban on the use of sulfites as a preservative for fresh fruits and vegetables, they continue to be used in preserving dried fruits, making wine, and to preserve seafood and other meats. Sometimes trace amounts can be found in products because of the indirect ways sulfites are used. Most countries do not require labeling of trace amounts of the compound.

Reading Food Labels is Important

The following is a list of ingredients to be aware of, that have sulfite containing compounds:

- **Sulfite ammonia caramel**
- **Caustic sulfite caramel**
- **Sodium bisulphite (sodium hydrogen sulfite)**
- **Sodium sulfite**
- **Potassium metabisulfite**
- **Sodium metabisulfite**
- **Potassium sulfite**
- **Calcium hydrogen sulphite**
- **Calcium sulfite**
- **Potassium hydrogen sulfite**
- **Sulfur Dioxide (not a true sulfite, but chemically very close**

Foods Containing Sulfites

(Includes but are not limited to the following)

Alcoholic Beverages

Some beers, cocktail mixes, wine, wine coolers, champagne.

Pastries

Fruit pies, Cookies, crackers, mixes with dried fruits or vegetables, pie crust, pizza crust, quiche crust, flour tortillas.

Drink Mixes

Dried citrus fruit beverage mixes.

Condiments and Relishes

Wasabi, horseradish, onion and pickle relishes, pickles, olives, salad dressing mixes, wine vinegar, pickled ginger.

Sugars, Syrups

Brown, raw, powdered or white sugar derived from sugar beets. Corn syrup, maple syrup, fruit toppings, and Syrups high-fructose corn syrup, pancake syrup.

Dairy

Filled milk (a specially prepared skim milk in which vegetable oils, rather than animal fats, are added to increase its fat content).

Medicines

Antiemetics (taken to prevent nausea), cardiovascular drugs, antibiotics, tranquilizers, intravenous muscle relaxants, analgesics (painkillers), anesthetics, steroids and nebulized bronchodilator solutions (used for treatment of asthma).

Seafood

Canned clams; fresh, frozen, canned or dried shrimp; frozen lobster; scallops; dried cod, frozen shrimp.

Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Fresh potatoes that have been cut for french fries and hash-browns.

Gelatins, Puddings, and Fillings

Fruit fillings, flavored and unflavored gelatin, pectin jelling agents.

Grains

Cornstarch, modified food starch, spinach pasta, gravies, hominy, breading, batters, noodle/rice mixes.

Jams, preserves, and jellies

Jams and jellies.

Nuts

Shredded coconut.

Canned fruit products

Canned, bottled or frozen fruit juices (including lemon, lime, grape and apple); dried fruit; canned, bottled or frozen dietetic fruit or fruit juices; maraschino cherries and glazed fruit.

Canned Vegetable products

Vegetable juice, canned vegetables (including potatoes), pickled vegetables (including sauerkraut), dried vegetables, instant mashed potatoes, frozen potatoes and store bought potato salad.

Snacks

Dried fruit snacks, trail mixes, filled crackers, granola bars.

Soups

Canned seafood soups, dried soup mixes.

Teas

Instant tea, liquid tea concentrates, canned tea drinks.

Common Symptoms of Sulfite Sensitivity (includes but are not limited to)

Asthma

Congestion in nose and sinus

Runny Nose

Frontal Headache

Itchiness

Hives

Flushing

Upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.

Difficulty swallowing

Drop in blood pressure

Trouble Breathing

What now?

Read food labels carefully looking for the word "sulfite"

Consider genetic testing to evaluate your body's ability to process Sulfites.

Schedule a Functional Medicine Consultation with Dr. Matt

Questions? Contact Barbara Dubis RN Practice Manager 314-395-4934

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