



In a perfect world, we'd buy fresh, natural ingredients and make everything we eat from scratch. But life is rarely perfect. Sometimes, it's all you can do to grab a frozen meal, open the box, and throw it into the microwave. It happens to all of us.

Don't despair. You can make better choices when opting for processed foods and beverages, if you know what ingredients to avoid at all costs. Tear out this list, and you'll be able to traverse the super-market safely.

Check Those Labels: Ingredients You Don't Want to Eat

INGREDIENT	WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT	WHY IT'S BAD FOR YOU
Fats		
Partially Hydrogenated Oil	Fried foods, packaged crackers, cookies, cakes, non-dairy coffee creamers, cake mixes, pancake mixes, microwave popcorn, vegetable shortening, margarine	This is the trans fat everyone's warned you about. Trans fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels, lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels and increase your risk of developing heart disease and stroke
Palm Oil (or Palm Kernel Oil)	Packaged cookies, cakes, snacks, bakery goods, crackers and peanut butter	Food manufacturers that have stopped using partially hydrogenated oils have increasingly started using this fat instead. It's loaded with saturated fat, which raises your bad cholesterol levels
Preservatives		
Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Benzoate	Sodas, fruit juices, salad dressings	Benzene is a known carcinogen that is also linked with serious thyroid damage
Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) and Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)	Cereals, gum, fast food, processed potatoes, drink mixes, shortening, snack foods...you name it. Also used in food packaging	While both preservatives have been classified as "generally recognized to be safe," studies on rats suggest that BHA can be assumed to be carcinogenic in humans. BHT shows signs of being a weak endocrine disrupter that could affect the lungs, liver, kidney, and thyroid
Sodium Nitrates and Nitrites	Processed meats, including hot dogs, bacon, lunch meats	Believed to cause colon cancer and metabolic syndrome, which can lead to diabetes
Potassium Bromate (or bromated flour)	Commercially produced bread, some flours, fast food buns	Linked to renal and thyroid cancer. Banned in virtually all countries, except the U.S. and Japan
Artificial Colors and Flavors		
Blue Dye No 1 and No 2	Hard candies, lollipops, coated chocolate candies, beverages, ice cream, cereals	Linked to ADHD, allergies, and asthma in humans and cancer in animals, which suggests they can cause cancer in humans
Green Dye No 3	Candies, beverages, ice cream, sorbet	Causes reproductive and bladder cancer in rats, which suggests it is carcinogenic in humans. Has been banned in the European Union

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Artificial Colors and Flavors		
Red Dye No 3	Kids' frozen meals, fruit roll ups, sausage casings, maraschino cherries, baked goods	Linked to ADHD, allergies, and asthma, as well as thyroid cancer
Yellow Dye No 6	Cereal bars, baked goods, gelatin desserts, sausages, beverages, boxed mac & cheese	Linked to ADHD, allergies, and asthma in humans and cancer in animals
Diacetyl	Butter-flavored microwave popcorn, flours, chocolate, cooking oils, candy, chips, frosting	Causes severe lung disease when heated and inhaled
Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)	Soups, salad dressings, chips, crackers, frozen dinners, fast food	This "flavor enhancer" has been linked to everything from nausea, burning in the mouth, weakness in the legs and arms, and allergic skin reactions, to nervous system and brain dysfunction
Sweeteners		
Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal)	Soft drinks, diet and sugar-free foods, gum, artificial sweetener powders	No conclusive evidence, but has been reported to cause seizures, headaches, depression, worsening of anxiety and sleep disorders, dizziness, nausea, abdominal pain and cramping. Exceptionally dangerous to those with the genetic disorder phenylketonuria (PKU)
Saccharin (Sweet 'N Low, Sugar Twin)	Soft drinks, diet and sugar-free foods, gum, artificial sweetener powders	Known to cause bladder cancer in rats and has long been suspected of causing cancer in humans. Linked to reports of headaches, diarrhea, and skin issues
Sucralose (Splenda)	Soft drinks, diet and sugar-free foods, gum, artificial sweetener powders	Studies have linked this artificial sweetener to an increase in type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and metabolic syndrome, as well as a reduction in good gut bacteria and possible interference with drug absorption
High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)	Commercial baked goods, including bread, cookies, cakes; ketchup; practically any processed food you can imagine	Gets metabolized directly into fat, increases cholesterol and has been linked to an increase in diabetes and obesity

Wallet Sized Health Hero Guide to Toxic Ingredients

TOXIC FOODS TO AVOID

FATS
Partially Hydrogenated Oil
Palm Oil (or Palm Kernel Oil)

PRESERVATIVES
Sodium Benzoate and Potassium Benzoate
Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) and Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)
Sodium Nitrites and Nitrates
Potassium Bromate (or bromated flour)

ARTIFICIAL COLORS AND FLAVORS
Blue Dye No 1 and No 2
Green Dye No 3
Red Dye No 3
Yellow Dye No 6
Diacetyl
Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)

SWEETENERS
Aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal)
Saccharin (Sweet 'N Low, Sugar Twin)
Sucralose (Splenda)
High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)

