



The Top 8 Ingredients to Avoid on Food Labels

by author Josie Padro



Reading food labels can be confusing and time-consuming. Lists of ingredients often contain convoluted terms you've never seen before; so deciding if they're good for you can be a daunting task.

The easiest way to navigate a food label is to know how to avoid the top health offenders. If you'd rather enjoy your shopping instead of wading through confusing lists, watch out for the following eight ingredients and always avoid them at the grocery store.

Artificial Colourings: Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, and Yellow 6 have been linked to cancer and show up in candy, soda pop, baked goods and many other products.

Artificial Sweeteners: Acesulfame-K, aspartame, and saccharine. At the moment surcralose (also known as *Splenda*) gets a passing grade, but there is still some question about whether it's truly safe.

Monosodium Glutamate (MSG): A flavour enhancer, MSG is often used to mask a lack of healthy ingredients in a food.

Partially Hydrogenated Oil (Trans Fat): Often found in frozen foods and bakery items, trans fats are more harmful to your heart and blood vessels than saturated fats.

Propyl Galate: A preservative added to meat products, chicken soups, and chewing gum. Studies suggest it is linked to cancer.

Sodium Nitrate, Sodium Nitrite: Nitrites, which also enhance colour and flavour, act as preservatives in many prepared meat products. They are potentially cancer causing.

Sugar: This familiar ingredient can appear on the label as fructose, corn syrup, glucose, and high-fructose corn syrup. Sugar has made its way into a huge range of products and is currently the number one culprit in the obesity epidemic.

Salt: Added in generous amounts to foods such as potato chips, soups, and crackers, salt adds flavour and acts as a preservative. High salt diets have been linked to high blood pressure and a greater risk of a heart attack.