

## Dangerous Ingredients

With corn syrup makers scrambling to change its sullied name ("corn sugar," anyone?), *The Daily Beast* polled food scientists to discover the unhealthiest cooking ingredients.

Watch out **disodium phosphate** (a sodium additive), **Xanthan gum** (a polysaccharide), and **monosodium glutamate** (also known as **MSG**), there's a new word in the food ingredient dictionary: **corn sugar**. That is, if the Corn Refiners Association gets its way and receives clearance from the Food and Drug Administration to start marketing high fructose corn syrup with a new, sweeter-sounding name.

*The Daily Beast* consulted national food-safety experts to find out which ingredients, hormones, and additives found in pantries across the U.S. are the worst for consumers. Corn syrup is just the beginning.



## Aspartame & Artificial Sweeteners

Commonly found in: soft drinks, cereals, diet ice cream, diet maple syrups

The expert says: "I wouldn't touch that stuff with a ten foot pole," says **Rick North, project director for the Campaign for Safe Food.**



### **BHA and BHT**

Commonly found in: Potato chips, butter, beer, chewing gum

The expert says: BHA and BHT are "preservatives in products like soups, cereals, oils and crackers that may cause allergic reactions and neuro-toxic effects, including hyperactivity," says **Deanna Minich, a clinical nutritionist and author of An A to Z Guide to Food Additives.**



## **Food Coloring**

Commonly found in: candy, beverages, sausage, gelatin

The expert says: "Food dyes and coloring are something that parents should just get out of their kids' systems...They are usually markers for a really inferior product," says **David Steinman, author of Diet for a Poisoned Planet and host of the Green Patriot Radio show.**



## **Gluten**

Commonly found in: pretzels, bread, soy sauce, licorice

The expert says: "Due to improved testing methods and greater awareness, people are finding they can be 'gluten intolerant' without having celiac disease. Various reasons for this rise may include changing strains of wheat through genetic modification, impaired immunity, or simply the sheer number of products that contain it and the frequency with which they are eaten—or a combination of any of these factors," says **Minich**.



### **Growth agents, like rBGH and Ractopamine**

Commonly found in: milk and pork

The expert says: "People with heart conditions should not be anywhere near [Ractopamine]. This is the stuff they're shooting into pigs to make them grow faster right at the end of their life before they're slaughtered so that when they're slaughtered it hasn't even had any time at all to work through the pig's system and excrete it, so it's just a disaster," **North** says. "160 countries have banned the use of this but not the U.S."





### **High-Fructose Corn Syrup**

Commonly found in: yogurt, bread, cereal, condiments, cookies

The expert says: "We're just getting too much sugar in our foods. For years, manufacturers have been taking fat out of foods and putting sugar in," says **Minich**.



### **Nitrates and Nitrites**

Commonly found in: hotdogs, lunchmeat, bacon, pepperoni

The expert says: "Nitrites are added to hot dogs and cured meats in order to preserve that red color so they don't turn grey, but when you consume [them] they form nitrosamines, which cause cancer...Studies have shown that kids exposed to nitrites have higher rates of brain cancer and leukemia and adults have higher rates of brain cancer," says **Steinman**.



### **Potassium Bromate**

Commonly found in: bread and rolls

The expert says: Used to increase the "fluffiness" of bread products, Potassium Bromate is a known carcinogen that's banned in other countries, and requires a warning label in products sold in California. "The FDA should ban bromate immediately," said **Dr. Michael F. Jacobson, the executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest in 1999.**





## **Sulfites**

Commonly found in: dried fruits, wine, lemon juice, molasses

The expert says: Sulfites are "preservatives found in fruits (especially grapes and wines, dried fruits) that may cause allergic reactions like respiratory difficulty, headache, nausea, and digestive complaints," says **Minich**.



### **White flour**

Commonly found in: pasta, bread, crackers, cake

The expert says: "White flour has typically been refined and chemically bleached with peroxides or chlorine to the point where it needs to be enriched or have synthetic nutrients added back to it. The problem is that it doesn't get close to resembling its natural state—full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Foods containing predominantly white flour may raise blood sugar and make your body work harder to metabolize it due to its high-glycemic index," says **Minich**.

**Source:** *The Daily Beast*