

A black metal shopping cart is positioned in a grocery store aisle. The cart is empty and has a red handle. To the left of the cart, there are shelves stocked with various condiments, including bottles of dressing, sauce, and mayonnaise. The background shows more shelves with packaged goods, creating a typical grocery store environment. The lighting is bright, and the floor is a light-colored tile.

WHAT'S ON YOUR FOOD LABEL?

13 Toxic Ingredients to Avoid



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Are food labels confusing you?

COME OVER AND HAVE A LOOK

Grocery shopping has become hazardous to our health. The truth is that there are many harmful additives in processed food and very little nutrition. It's difficult to know what is safe, and what to avoid. Hopefully, this will help.

In health and wellness,

Amy Holmwood

1. Pesticides

Used on produce to prevent insects, these poisons often leave behind residues. They've been linked to everything from cancer to birth defects.

Solution: Look for organic foods. USDA organic foods are required to be synthetic pesticide-free.

2. BHA (Butylated Hydroxyanisole) & BHT (Butylated Hydroxytoluene)

Common processed food preservatives have been declared carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. They're also suspected of disrupting hormones and impacting male fertility.

Solution: Check ingredients.

3. Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH/rBST)

Given to cows to increase milk production, rBGH produces elevated levels of insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) in dairy products. IGF-1 is a significant factor in breast, prostate and colon cancers.

Solution: Choose organic or rBGH-free dairy products.

4. Sodium Aluminum Sulphate and Potassium Aluminum Sulphate

Used in processed cheese products, baked goods, and microwave popcorn, among other packaged goods, these ingredients are linked to adverse reproductive, neurological, behavioral, and developmental effects.

Solution: Read ingredients.

5. Bisphenol-A (BPA)

Found in food and beverage can linings, this hormone-mimicker is suspected of promoting breast and prostate cancer, reproductive and behavioral problems, obesity, and diabetes.

Solution: Avoid canned foods. Choose fresh, dried, or frozen instead.

6. Sodium Nitrite/Nitrate

Used in deli foods like processed meats, these preservatives are linked to many types of cancer. Beware of “uncured” and “no added nitrites/nitrates” products. They often use celery juice instead, which is high in nitrates.

Solution: Read ingredient lists to avoid this toxin.

7. Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons

These carcinogens are created when fat is burned—by flames or very high heat.

Solution: Pre-cook grillables and finish over low flame.

8. Heterocyclic Amines

These carcinogens form when natural substances found in meats and fish react together in high temperatures like those found during grilling.

Solution: Pre-cook grillables and finish over low flame.

9. Acrylamide

Given to cows to increase milk production, rGBH produces elevated levels of insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1) in dairy products. IGF-1 is a significant factor in breast, prostate and colon cancers.

Solution: Choose organic or rBGH-free dairy products.

10. Brominated Vegetable Oil

Used in fruit-flavored drinks and sodas, animal studies found high doses of this toxin led to reproductive and behavioral problems.

Solution: Check ingredients.

11. Artificial Food Coloring/Dyes

These ubiquitous chemicals have been linked to neurological disorders like ADHD.

Solution: Read ingredient lists to avoid.

12. Dioxins

These highly toxic pollutants accumulate in fatty foods and are linked to cancer, liver damage, birth defects, and endocrine and immune disruption.

Solution: Choose low- or no-fat foods.

13. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

Found in about 70 percent of processed foods with corn-, soy-, cottonseed-, canola-, and sugar beet-based ingredients, GMOs may cause organ damage, gastrointestinal and immune system disorders, accelerated aging, and infertility.

Solution: Go organic! GMOs aren't allowed in certified organic foods. And they aren't ever labeled, making them difficult to avoid in non-organic foods.