

Natural Food Report

Preservatives – The Basics

Did you know that the average yearly consumption of food additives excluding salt, sugar or sweeteners is 5 to 10 lbs. per person? That is 5 to 10 lbs. of chemicals that have no nutritional value and can upset our unique biochemical balance! Could there be a direct relationship to weight problems, cancer, diabetes, migraines and allergies?

Our modern way of life wants to have everything pre-planned, pre-packaged and pre-cooked. We want our food to store for unlimited amounts of time. There are about 100 “antispoilants” in use today to retard or prevent food from “going bad”. Let’s talk about some of the more popular preservatives.

Sodium Propionate: A colorless, odorless crystal that gathers water in damp climates and prevents mold.

Calcium Propionate: This is a combination of propanoic acid and calcium salt. Propanoic acid occurs naturally in apples, strawberries and tea. However, it can be obtained from wood pulp or waste liquor. It is shown to cause migraines and large doses are lethal to rats! Calcium salts have shown to be gastric irritants.

These preservatives are most commonly found in off the shelf baked goods but are also used as a preservative in cosmetics and are used as an antifungal medication.

Sodium Benzoate is an antimicrobial agent that is used in off the shelf baked goods but works best in a slightly acidic media such as bottled soft drinks, fruit juices, pickles, preserves, jams, jellies and margarine. Sodium benzoate is moderately toxic by ingestion. It has shown to cause birth defects in experimental animals. Large doses by mouth can cause nausea and vomiting.

Two well-known preservatives used in cured or pickled products are Sodium Nitrate and Sodium Nitrite.

Sodium Nitrate is also known as salt-peter and used as a color fixative in cured meats. Nitrates combine with natural stomach saliva to create nitrosamines – powerful cancer-causing agents. Many studies with experimental animals have shown the development of cancerous tumors similar to those found in humans. Nitrates can disable an infant’s hemoglobin in which the hemoglobin can not transport adequate oxygen.

Sodium Nitrites resist the growth of clostridium botulinium spores. It is used as a color fixative in cured meats. This agent also becomes nitrosamines in our systems. It imparts the pink color we are all familiar with in hams, hot dogs, etc. Vitamin C and Vitamin E can be added to block the formation of nitrosamines.

Most recently some food processors have decreased the amount of sodium nitrites to 1/10th of 1% in cured meats. Perhaps public outcry is making a difference!

Rocky Plains Quality Meats now carries Ham and Bacon with no Nitrites or Nitrates!

Do yourself and your family a favor and just be aware of the preservatives in the foods you buy.

For more information or to purchase preservative-free foods, contact Rocky Plains Quality Meats 303-833-3791.