

SULFITE SENSITIVITY

WHAT ARE SULFITES?

Sulfites are sulfur based preservatives and are used to eliminate bacteria, preserve freshness and brightness, prolong crispness, prevent browning and increase storage life of certain food and drug products. They are also used as dough conditioners, bleaching agents and stabilizing agents

OTHER NAMES FOR SULFITES

There are six different names used for sulfites: sulfur dioxide, sodium sulfite, sodium bisulfite, potassium bisulfite, sodium metabisulfite and potassium metabisulfite. Sulfites, bisulfites and metabisulfites are all dry chemical forms of the gas, sulfur dioxide.

PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN SULFITES

Beverages	Soft drinks, canned and bottled fruit juices, grape juice, citrus drinks, instant tea and coffee, cider
Alcoholic Beverages	Wine, beer, cocktail mixes, wine coolers
Condiments	Wine vinegar, pickles, salad dressings, relishes
Confections	Molasses, sugar
Dips	Avocado, guacamole
Fish	Canned or fresh shrimp, shellfish (clams, crabs, lobster, scallops, crab), dried cod
Fresh fruit, vegetables	Grapes, fresh pre-cut potatoes, mushrooms, salad bar items, cut up fresh
Processed fruits	Dried fruit, fruit juice concentrates, purees, dried coconut, maraschino type
Processed vegetables	Frozen, dried or canned potatoes, salad bars, dried, canned, frozen or pickled vegetables, salad dressings, purees
Gravies	Canned or dried gravies and sauces
Processed meats	Sausage, cold meats, pate
Desserts	Fruit fillings, gelatin, cake mixes, pie dough, cookies
Grain products	Cornstarch, noodle and rice mixtures
Sweet sauces/syrups	Jams, jellies, molasses, corn or maple syrup
Soups/salads	Dried or canned soups, sauerkraut, coleslaw
Snack foods	Potato chips, trail mix

(OVER)

SYMPTOMS OF SULFITE SENSITIVITY

Symptoms may range from mild to severe and could include wheezing, shortness of breath, flushing, hives, gastrointestinal disturbance and possibly anaphylactic shock.

AVOIDANCE OF SULFITES

Reading labels is the best way to avoid sulfites in foods. Remember the different names that sulfites can have as you read labels. When eating out, check with the restaurant to make sure they do not use sulfites during food preparation.

TREATMENT

Since 5-10% of asthmatics suffer from sulfite sensitivity, anyone with asthma should carry a rescue inhaler when dining out. If a reaction to sulfites has happened before, then an antihistamine should be carried along with an epi-pen. If a severe reaction occurs and an epi-pen is used, follow up care should be done in an urgent care facility or an emergency room.