

food chemical sensitivities

clinical information for practitioners and patients

A number of natural substances found in foods can give rise to reactions linked to food sensitivities. Reactions may include hives and skin swellings, headaches, bowel irritation, mouth ulcers, and sensations of being generally unwell and run down, often for no apparent reason. Symptoms vary from person to person. Children can be irritable or restless, and are sometimes diagnosed as being 'hyperactive'. The reactions are believed to be proportional to the amount consumed and may therefore be cumulative in nature; however each individual has a unique threshold of tolerance. Initially, the process of understanding your individual reaction and threshold will involve detective work by yourself in conjunction with your health care practitioner.

Salicylates are a family of natural plant chemicals found in fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs and spices, jams, honey, yeast extracts, tea and coffee, juices, beer and wines. They are also present in flavourings (e.g. peppermint), perfumes, scented toiletries, eucalyptus oils, and some medications (Aspirin is a member of the salicylate family). Salicylates are highest in unripened fruit and decrease as fruit ripens. They are often concentrated just under the skin of fruit and vegetables and in the outer leaves of vegetables. All fruit and vegetables should be ripe and thickly peeled. Do not eat the outer leaves of leafy vegetables.

Amines are compounds that are known for their strong, pungent odours. For example, they are found in deli meats such as salami, bacon, ham and frankfurts, tinned fish and meats, tomato paste

and pasta sauces. Large amounts are present in cheese, chocolate, wines, beer and yeast extracts. They are also found in some fruits and vegetables, e.g. bananas, avocados, tomatoes and broad beans.

MSG (monosodium glutamate) is found naturally in most foods and in its free form, not linked to protein; it enhances the flavour of food. That is why foods rich in natural MSG are used frequently in cooking, for example: tomatoes, strong cheeses (eg. Blue and parmesan), mushrooms, stock cubes, sauces, meat extracts and yeast extracts. Pure MSG is also used as a flavour enhancer in soups, sauces, Asian cooking and snack foods.

The Salicylate Content of Food

* also high in amines

also high in natural MSG

FRUIT

NEGLIGIBLE	Banana* / Pear (peeled)
LOW	Apple-golden delicious / Nashi Pears / Paw paw*
MODERATE	Apple-red delicious / Custard apple / Fig* / Lemon* / Loquat / Mango / Tamarillo* / Pear (with peel)
HIGH	Avocado* / Apple-Jonathan / Apple-Granny Smith / Grapefruit / Mandarin* / Kiwi fruit* / Mulberry / Lychee / Nectarine / Passionfruit* / Peach / Pomegranate / Sugar Banana* / Watermelon
VERY HIGH	Apricot / Berries of all kinds / Blackcurrant / Currant / Date* / Grape* / Guava / Orange / Pineapple / Plum / Prune / Raisin / Redcurrant / Rockmelon / Sultana / Tangelo / Tangerine

VEGETABLES

NEGLIGIBLE	Bamboo Shoots / Beans-dried / Cabbage / Celery / Lentils-brown / Lentils-red / Lettuce (iceberg) / Peas-dried / Swede / Potato (white peeled)
LOW	Bean – green / Brussels sprout / Cabbage-red / Chives / Choko / Leek / Mung bean sprouts / Peas-green* # / Shallots
MODERATE	Asparagus / Beetroot / Broccoli* / Carrot / Cauliflower* / Chinese vegetables / Lettuce (other) / Marrow / Mushrooms* # / Onion / Parsnip / Potato # (new and red Pontiac) / Pumpkin / Spinach* / Snow Peas / Snow Pea sprout / Sweet corn# / Sweet Potato / Turnip
HIGH	Alfalfa sprouts / Artichoke / Broad bean / Chilli / Cucumber / Eggplant / Radish* / Tomato* # / Waterchestnut / Watercress / Zucchini
VERY HIGH	Capsicum / Champignon* / Chicory / Endive / Gherkin / Chilli / Olive* / Radish / Tomato Products*#

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NUTS, SNACKS

NEGLIGIBLE	Poppy seed
LOW	Cashews / Potato chips - plain / Sesame seeds
MODERATE	Brazil nuts* / Coconut* / Corn chips* / Hazel nuts* / Macadamia* / Peanut* / Pecan nuts* / Plain Popcorn / Pine nuts* / Pistachio nuts* / Pumpkin seeds / Sesame seeds* / Sunflower seeds* / Walnuts* #
HIGH	-
VERY HIGH	Almonds / Muesli bars / Savoury flavoured chips and snacks

SUGARS AND SWEETS

NEGLIGIBLE	Carob / Cocoa* / Maple Syrup / White Sugar
LOW	Caramels / Golden Syrup / Toffee / Malt Extract
MODERATE	Molasses / Raw Sugar
HIGH	-
VERY HIGH	Chewing gum / Fruit flavours / Honey / Honey flavours / Jam except pear / Liquorice / Mint flavoured sweets / Peppermints

CONDIMENTS

NEGLIGIBLE	Parsley Salt / Sea salt
LOW	Chives / Garlic / Malt Vinegar* / Saffron / Shallots / Soy Sauce* # / Vanilla (pure)
MODERATE	-
HIGH	All spice / Bay leaf / Caraway / Cardamom / Clove / Coriander / Cumin / Ginger / Mixed herbs / Mustard / Nutmeg / Oregano / Pepper / Rosemary / Tarragon / Turmeric / Vinegars
VERY HIGH	Aniseed / Cayenne / Commercial Gravies & Sauces# / Cinnamon / Curry / Dill / Fish sauce / Tomato pastes* #

BEVERAGES (Including alcohol)

NEGLIGIBLE	Decaffeinated coffee & tea / Aktavite / Milo / Ovaltine Carob / Powdered milk (goats, cows) / Soy milk / Pear juice (home-made) / Gin / Whisky / Vodka
LOW	-
MODERATE	Regular coffee / Herbal tea except Peppermint & Rosehip / Dandelion / Ecco / Bambu / Coke / Beer* / Sherry* / Brandy* / Cider
HIGH	Fruit juice other than pear juice
VERY HIGH	All other teas / Peppermint tea / Natures Cuppa / Cordials / Fruit flavoured drinks / Port* / Wine* / Rum / Liqueur

FATS AND OILS

NEGLIGIBLE	Butter / Margarine / Canola Oil / Safflower Oil / Sunflower Oil
LOW	Ghee
MODERATE	Almond Oil / Corn Oil / Peanut Oil / Sesame Oil / Walnut Oil
HIGH	Coconut Oil / Copha / Olive Oil
VERY HIGH	-

Our kidneys appear to use the amino acid glutathione to detoxify salicylates. It is suggested that salicylate intolerance may be caused by an inability to produce enough glutathione needed for the detoxification process. Detoxification support and guidance can be done under the guidance of a Health Care Practitioner.

Resources:

Friendly Food is a recipe book and guide to avoiding allergies, additives and problem chemicals.
RPA Allergy Unit. (Murdoch Books® ISBN 1-74045-376-X)