**Name:**

**“The 11 Scariest Things in Your Food**”. Bill Phillips and the Editors of Men's Health. 2/10/13. <http://health.yahoo.net/experts/menshealth/12-scariest-things-your-food>.  *Additional research by Leah Zerbe and Amy Rushlow*

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| I always tell my daughters they can make a difference in the world, even at their tender ages of 10 and 7. To them, I probably sound like the teacher from Peanuts—they're more interested in soccer and American Girl right now—but I hope the lesson eventually sinks in. | |

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| My latest example of a kid heroics for them: 15-year-old Sarah Kavanagh from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, who gathered more than 200,000 signatures in her online petition asking Gatorade to remove a controversial flame-retardant chemical. Last week, Gatorade announced that they would be removing the ingredient, brominated vegetable oil (BVO), within the next couple of months. That's great news—especially for me personally, because I love the stuff! Actually, so do my daughters. While Gatorade spokeswoman Molly Carter said the decision wasn’t in response to Sarah’s petition, the teen is claiming victory. Either way, we all win. The truth is chemicals that are used as weed killer, flame retardant, and sunscreen are startlingly common in your supermarket. But you won’t find “carcinogens,” “paint chemicals,” or “beaver anal gland juice” on the back panel. They’ll be hidden under names like “Butylated HydroxyAnisole” or “natural flavoring.” Break through the science experiment to find out what you’re really eating. Here are the scariest ingredients in your food: |

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| **1. Acesulfame Potassium (Acesulfame-K). WHAT IT IS:** A calorie-free artificial sweetener 200 times sweeter than sugar. It is often used with other artificial sweeteners to mask a bitter aftertaste. **FOUND IN:** More than 5,000 food products worldwide, including diet soft drinks and no-sugar-added ice cream. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Although the FDA has approved it for use in most foods, many health and industry insiders claim that the decision was based on flawed tests. Animal studies have linked the chemical to lung and breast tumors and thyroid problems. |
| **2. Aspartame. WHAT IT IS:** A near-zero-calorie artificial sweetener made by combining two amino acids with methanol. Most commonly used in diet soda, aspartame is 180 times sweeter than sugar. **FOUND IN:** More than 6,000 grocery items including diet sodas, yogurts, and the table-top sweeteners NutraSweet and Equal. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Over the past 30 years, the FDA has received thousands of consumer complaints due mostly to neurological symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, memory loss, and, in rare cases, epileptic seizures. Many studies have shown aspartame to be completely harmless, while others indicate that the additive might be responsible for a range of cancers. |

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| **3. Titanium Dioxide. WHAT IT IS:** A component of the metallic element titanium commonly used in paints and sunscreens. The food industry adds it to hundreds of products to make overly processed items appear whiter. **FOUND IN:** Processed salad dressing, coffee creamers, and icing. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Titanium is a mined substance that's sometimes contaminated with toxic lead. Plus, most white dressings (like creamy ranch) aren’t great for you anyway. Both your health and your waistline will fare better if you go with an olive oil- or vinegar-based salad topper instead. |

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| **4. Gyphosphate. WHAT IT IS:** The active ingredient in the popular week killer Roundup. It’s used on corn and soy crops genetically engineered to withstand a heavy dousing of the chemical. **FOUND IN:** Most nonorganic packaged foods containing corn- and soy-derived ingredients. Because it’s a systemic herbicide, it’s taken up by the plant- meaning you eat it. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Glyphosphate exposure is linked to obesity, learning disabilities, and infertility. |

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| **5. Butylated Hydroxy Anisole (BHA). WHAT IT IS:** A petroleum-derived antioxidant used to preserve fats and oils. **FOUND IN:** Beer, crackers, cereals, butter, and foods with added fats. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Studies have shown BHA to cause cancer in the forestomachs of rats, mice, and hamsters. The Department of Health and Human Services classifies the preservative as "reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen." |
| **6. Interesterified Fat. WHAT IT IS:** A semi-soft fat created by chemically blending fully hydrogenated and non-hydrogenated oils. It was developed in response to the public demand for an alternative to trans fats. **FOUND IN:** Pastries, pies, margarine, frozen dinners, and canned soups. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Testing on these fats has not been extensive, but the early evidence doesn't look promising. A study by Malaysian researchers showed a 4-week diet of 12 percent interesterified fats increased the ratio of LDL to HDL cholesterol. Furthermore, this study showed an increase in blood glucose levels and a decrease in insulin response. |

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| **7. Red #3 (Erythrosine) and Red #40 (Allura Red). WHAT THEY ARE:** Food dyes that are orange-red and cherry red, respectively. Red #40 is the most widely used food dye in America. **FOUND IN:** Fruit cocktail,candy, chocolate cake, cereal, beverages, pastries, maraschino cherries, and fruit snacks. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** The FDA has proposed a ban on Red #3 in the past, but so far the agency has been unsuccessful in implementing it. After the dye was inextricably linked to thyroid tumors in rat studies, the FDA managed to have the liquid form of the dye removed from external drugs and cosmetics. |
| **8. Yellow #5 (Tartrazine) and Yellow #6 (Sunset Yellow). WHAT THEY ARE:** The second and third most common food colorings, respectively. **FOUND IN:** Cereal, pudding, bread mix, beverages, chips, cookies, and condiments. **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** Several studies have linked both dyes to learning and concentration disorders in children, and there are piles of animal studies demonstrating potential risks such as kidney and intestinal tumors. One study found that mice fed high doses of sunset yellow had trouble swimming straight and righting themselves in water. The FDA does not view these as serious risks to humans. |

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| **9. Castoreum. WHAT IT IS:** Beaver anal gland juice. Really. Beavers combine it with their urine to mark their territory. **FOUND IN:** Vanilla or raspberry flavoring in processed foods, labeled only as “natural flavoring.” **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:** It’s beaver anal gland juice. |

# Lylah M. Alphonse. “Study: Diet Soda Increases the Risk of Diabetes. Why Do We Still Drink This Stuff?” 2/8/13. http://shine.yahoo.com/healthy-living/study-diet-soda-increases-risk-diabetes-why-still-192600358.html

Why do we keep drinking diet soda?

Yet another study confirms what people have been saying for ages: Stop drinking diet soda. Like, right now. Drinking just one 12-ounce can of an artificially sweetened fizzy drink per week can increase your risk of Type 2 diabetes by 33 percent, French researchers found. And given that most people don't stop at a single weekly serving, your real risk for diabetes could actually be much higher.

The study, which was announced Thursday and will be published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, was conducted by France's National Institute of Health and Medical Research and covered 66,118 middle-aged women whose dietary habits and health were tracked from 1993 to 2007.

The results were unexpected. Though it's well-known that people who consume a lot of sugar are more likely to develop diabetes, the researchers found that participants who drank "light" or "diet" soft drinks had a higher risk of developing Type 2 diabetes than those who drank regular, sugar-filled sodas. Those who drank 100 percent natural squeezed fruit juices instead had no additional risk.

Women who choose artificially flavored soft drinks usually drink twice as many of them as women who choose regular soda or juice—2.8 glasses per week compared to 1.6 glasses. "Yet when an equal quantity is consumed, the risk of contracting diabetes is higher for 'light' or 'diet' drinks than for 'non-light' or 'non-diet' drinks," the researchers, epidemiologists Francoise Clavel-Chapelon and Guy Fagherazzi, said in a statement. Women who drank up to 500 milliliters (about 12 ounces) of artificially sweetened beverages per week were 33 percent more likely to develop the disease, and women who drank about 600 milliliters (about 20 ounces) per week had a 66 percent increase in risk.

Drinking sweetened beverages increases the risk of becoming overweight, which is itself a risk factor in developing diabetes. But the study didn't find that the results were the same even among overweight women. So how can artificially sweetened drinks be making the problem worse if they're fat- and calorie-free?

"With respect, in particular, to 'light' or 'diet' drinks, the relationship with diabetes can be explained partially by a greater craving for sugar in general by female consumers of this type of soft drink," the researchers explained. "Furthermore, aspartame, one of the main artificial sweeteners used today, causes an increase in glycaemia and consequently a rise in the insulin level in comparison to that produced by sucrose."

Translation: Drinking artificially sweetened drinks makes you crave other sweet things (hello, chocolate!). And your body reacts to aspartame—also known as NutraSweet and Equal—much in the same way that it reacts to plain old sugar.

According to the American Diabetes Association, about 25.8 million children and adults in the United States have diabetes—about 8.3 percent of the population. The disease is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in people age 20 and older, and can also cause heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and damage to the nervous system. Type 2 diabetes—which can be controlled by diet and exercise rather than a daily insulin injection—is the most common form of diabetes in the United States.

The study's authors cautioned that more research was needed in order to prove a true causal link between diet sodas and Type 2 diabetes. "Information on beverage consumption was not updated during the follow-up, and dietary habits may have changed over time," they admitted in their report. "We cannot rule out that factors other than ASB [artificially sweetened beverages] are responsible for the association with diabetes."