

Food Additives & Inflammatory Bowel Disease: Common Additives

Common Additives				
Additive	Function	Research Potential beneficial effects?	FDA approved as safe?	Kim's thoughts
Polysorbate-80 (P80)	emulsifier/ stabilizer	Studied for toxicity and potential to cause cancer; possibility of contribution to IBD, metabolic syndrome, and other chronic inflammatory conditions; possibly allows for bacteria to travel through the intestinal lining	Yes, GRAS up to 1%	Excluded on SCD and would recommend minimizing exposure as much as possible to the general population
Carboxymethyl-cellulose (CMC)	emulsifier	Some studies in animal models; possibility of contribution to IBD, metabolic syndrome, and other chronic inflammatory conditions	Yes, GRAS up to 2%	Excluded on SCD and would recommend minimizing exposure as much as possible to the general population
Carrageenan Also known as: Red seaweed extract (Chondrus crispus or Irish moss)	Improves texture	Glucose intolerance and insulin resistance in mouse models Multiple animal studies suggests contribution to colitis (intestinal inflammation) lesions in the colon, mucosal erosion, ulcers, intestinal bleeding leading to anemia, malignancies, and stomach problems	Yes, authorized in a wide range of foods, including fermented milk products for infants and toddlers, and for special medical purposes; authorized in the EU	Excluded on SCD diet; high in polysaccharides - unknown impact for the general population
Maltodextrin (MDX)	Food processing and added sweetener	Shown to inhibit intestinal defenses Shown to increase stress at the cellular level in animal studies, ultimately reduce mucus production and intestinal susceptibility	Yes	Excluded on the SCD; particularly may pose a harm for people with IBD
Soy lecithin	Natural emulsifier	Suggested to have a beneficial effect on human cell membranes and inflammatory pathways	Yes	Legal on the SCD when derived from egg yolks; Illegal on the SCD when derived from soy Okay for general public in moderation
Artificial coloring, flavors, or "natural flavoring"	Synthetic chemicals or genetically engineered ingredients added to act as solvents, preservatives or flavor enhancers	Hyperactivity in children, linked to tumors and cancer; studies suggest alterations to intestinal microbiome, mucus production, and immune response	Yes Note: Flavoring mixtures (can contain more than 100 substances, with non-flavor substances making up to 80-90% of the mixture); incidental additives (manufacture does not disclose presence on food labels)	Exclude artificial ingredients on the SCD; For the general consumer, avoid these ingredients in condiments, mixes, powders, dressings, candies, pre-packaged baked goods, etc. Contact the manufacturer of products for more information.
Nitrites and nitrates	Preservative, antimicrobial food additive	Linked to health concerns including stomach, brain, and thyroid cancers, as well as digestive tract harm and altered gut microbiome	Yes	Excluded on SCD and would recommend minimizing exposure as much as possible to the general population