

Low MSG Diet

What is MSG?

Monosodium glutamate (MSG) is a flavour enhancer added to some commercial foods. Glutamine is also found naturally in some foods.

Is MSG safe?

For most people MSG (and related flavour enhancers) are safe and do not cause a problem. However, a small amount of people react to these flavour enhancers.

In sensitive people MSG and related flavour enhancers can cause rashes, headaches, restlessness and gastric irritation. Tolerance levels will vary greatly between people.

How to avoid MSG and related flavour enhancers

MSG and related flavour enhancers may be used as an ingredient to increase the flavour of some commercial food products. The presence of any added MSG (or related flavour enhancer) should be declared on the ingredients label of a packaged food. Always check the ingredient list on the food product label carefully.

The following food additive numbers should be avoided:

- 620 Glutamic acid
- 621 Monosodium glutamate (MSG)
- 622 Monopotassium glutamate
- 623 Calcium glutamate
- 624 Monammonium glutamate
- 625 Magnesium glutamate
- 627 Disodium guanylate (DSG or GMP)
- 631 Disodium inosinate (DSI or IMP)
- 635 Disodium 5'ribonucleotides (I&G or 'nucleotides')

To make shopping easier – **aim to avoid all additive numbers 620-635**

If you are not sure, check with the manufacturer or avoid the food.

If I can't tolerate MSG and related flavour enhancers should I avoid other food additives?

No. Many people who do not tolerate MSG and related flavour enhancers tolerate other food additives. If you are unsure, talk to your doctor or dietitian.

Eating away from home

Always ask the food outlet (e.g. restaurant or take-away shop) if any of their foods or drinks contain any added MSG. If you are not sure about a food, then do not eat it.



Naturally occurring glutamates in food

Glutamates occur naturally in some foods and sensitive individuals may need to limit their intake of these foods.

Foods naturally high in glutamates

- > Yeast extracts (e.g. Vegemite, Promite, Marmite, Mighty Mite)
- > Hydrolysed vegetable protein
- > Soy sauce, soy paste, soy protein, miso, tempeh, fish sauce, oyster sauce.
- > Stock cubes, pastes and powders
- > Processed meat, fish, tomato or vegetable pastes or sauces

Other foods containing glutamates

- > Parmesan and other strong cheeses
- > Tomatoes (especially sauce, paste or powder)
- > Mushrooms, broccoli, spinach, green peas
- > Grapes, sultanas, raisins, wine
- > Plums, prunes

Commercial foods that may contain MSG and related flavour enhancers

- > Flavoured chips, savoury biscuits and crackers
- > Flavoured noodles and snacks with flavour packets or sachets
- > Soups, sauces and gravy mixes
- > Stock (cubes, pastes and powders)
- > Crumbing mixes
- > Seasoned salt (e.g. chicken salt)
- > Pre-prepared meals (e.g. frozen meals)
- > Pies, pasties and sausage rolls
- > Sausages, marinated and seasoned meats
- > Bottled soy or oriental sauces (soy sauce also contains natural glutamate)
- > Deli meats (e.g. fritz) and chicken nuggets
- > Flavoured tuna
- > Vegetarian sausages and burgers

More information

The original and educational content of this booklet has been reviewed by specialist Dietitians at the Women's and Children's Health Network (WCHN), SA Health. For any matters relating to this resource, please contact the WCHN Nutrition Department on (08) 8161 7233.

Food product and vitamin supplementation information contained in this booklet was up to date at the time of revision. If you are not sure about food, check with the manufacturer.

Produced by

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