



How do we know that a food or beverage contains additives?

European Union (EU) legislation provides that food additives should be indicated on ALL food and beverage labels (either with their full name or with their E number), together with their specific function.

Stabiliser: Carb. gum E440
Sweetener: Saccharine E955



Which conditions for use must a food additive meet in order to be approved?

In Europe, a substance can be used as an additive only if it has been proven safe for use and after it has been authorised by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) for a certain use and at a certain level. The authorisation process includes, among others, toxicology tests, detailed information regarding prolonged use, interaction with other substances, as well as the acceptable daily intake.

The use of a food additive may be authorised only if it complies with the following conditions:

- on the basis of current scientific data, it is not harmful to human health, at the recommended dosage
- it fulfils a technological purpose/need that cannot be achieved otherwise
- its use does not mislead but benefits the consumer



Therefore, the next time you come across the letter "E" on food packaging, remember:

- According to food legislation, additives are used in foodstuffs and beverages only when it is absolutely necessary because they serve a specific purpose that cannot be achieved otherwise.
- Each additive is assigned a single "E" code which confirms that it has undergone several rigorous safety checks and evaluations to determine if it is safe for consumption.
- In Europe, additives are monitored by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and approved by the European Commission only once it has been ascertained that, at the dosage and in the foodstuffs they are used, they are not harmful to the consumer's health and safety.
- An artificial E number does not mean that it is harmful.
- At regular intervals, EFSA re-evaluates already approved additives to take into account new scientific data and food technology innovations.

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