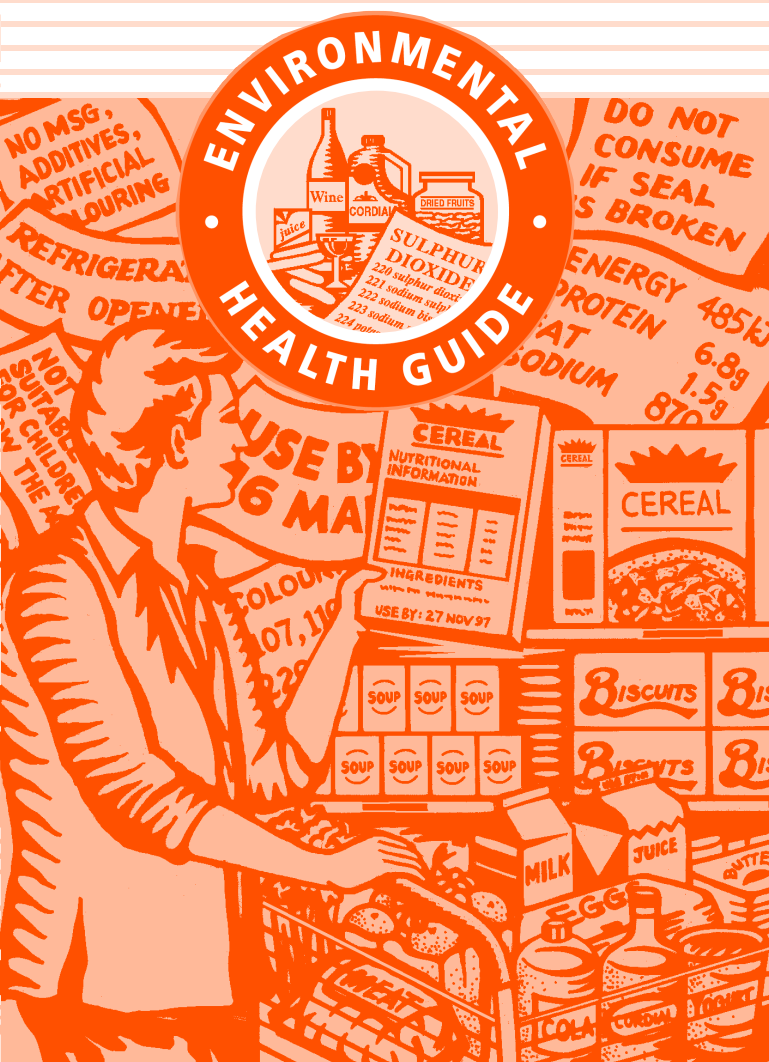
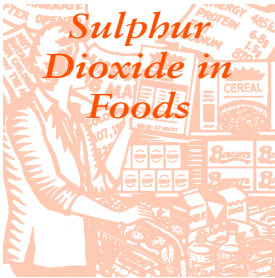


Sulphur Dioxide in Foods





Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) is a substance used as a preservative to prevent food spoilage. It is used in many foods including cordials, dried fruits,

fruit juices, soft drinks, sausages and wines.

Where sulphur dioxide is added to foods it must be declared either by the full name of the compound or by the use of the food additive number, e.g. "Preservative (223)".



Permitted compounds containing sulphur dioxide and their approved additive numbers are:

220	Sulphur dioxide
221	Sodium sulphite
222	Sodium bisulphite
223	Sodium metabisulphite
224	Potassium metabisulphite
225	Potassium sulphite
228	Potassium bisulphite

Sensitivity to sulphur dioxide

Sulphur dioxide, at the levels permitted in food, will not affect most people. However, certain groups, particularly asthmatics, may be sensitive to this preservative.

People who are sensitive to sulphur dioxide usually get a burning sensation in the throat, tight chest, wheezing and sometimes respiratory distress.



Studies show that not all asthmatics will have a reaction after eating foods containing sulphur dioxide. The likelihood of a reaction depends on the type of food, its acidity, the amount of sulphur dioxide and the sensitivity of the person.

Consumers who are sensitive to sulphur dioxide should avoid foods containing this preservative. This can be achieved by selecting foods which do not declare sulphur dioxide on the label.

Food labelling

The amount of sulphur dioxide permitted in foods and labelling requirements are detailed in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

The ingredients of packaged foods must be listed on the label.

A few foods do not require a full ingredient list to be declared on the package. However, if these foods contain more than 25 mg/kg of sulphur dioxide, the package must contain a statement declaring the presence of sulphur dioxide e.g. “CONTAINS PRESERVATIVE (SULPHUR DIOXIDE or the food additive number)”.

Sulphur dioxide can be carried over into the end product from food ingredients. For example, dried fruit may contain up to 3000 mg/kg of sulphur dioxide and when used as an ingredient in other foods may result in a low level of sulphur dioxide in the final product.

Sulphur dioxide is only permitted in certain foods at prescribed levels as specified in the Code. The following table lists foods that may contain sulphur dioxide with the maximum permitted level by food type.



<i>Food Type</i>	<i>Maximum Permitted Level of Sulphur Dioxide</i>
Avocado spread, puree and pulp (frozen)	300 mg/kg
Beer	25 mg/L
Brewed soft drink	115 mg/kg
Cabbage, dehydrated	1500 mg/kg
Carrots, dehydrated	1000 mg/kg
Cooked manufactured meat	260 mg/kg
Crystallised pineapple	280 mg/kg
Desiccated coconut	50 mg/kg
Dried fruit	3000 mg/kg
Essences	230 mg/L
Flavoured cordial, flavoured syrup, flavoured topping	230 mg/kg
Flour products other than bread	300 mg/kg
French beans, dehydrated	750 mg/kg
Fruit drink	115 mg/kg
Fruit juice	115 mg/kg
Fruit cordial, fruit syrup, fruit topping	230 mg/kg
Fruit wine, vegetable wine, mead	
- with less than 5 g/L residual sugar	200 mg/L
- with more than 5 g/L residual sugar	300 mg/L
Gelatine	750 mg/kg



<i>Food Type</i>	<i>Maximum Permitted Level of Sulphur Dioxide</i>
Glucose - syrup - dried	300 mg/kg 40 mg/kg
Imitation fruit	3000 mg/kg
Low joule jam	285 mg/kg
Maraschino cherries (cocktail cherries)	300 mg/kg
Mixed dried fruit	3000 mg/kg
Peas	1000 mg/kg
Pickles	750 mg/kg
Potatoes - dehydrated - raw, peeled	500 mg/kg 50 mg/kg
Prawns/shrimps, uncooked	30 mg/kg
Silverbeet, dehydrated	1500 mg/kg
Soft drink	115 mg/kg
Sausages	500 mg/kg
Tomato juice, (pH less than 4.5) - non-canned - non-canned concentrate	115 mg/kg 400 mg/kg
Vinegar - prepared from wine	25 mg/kg 100 mg/kg
Water-based iced confection mix	25 mg/kg
Wine - less than 35g/L sugar - others	250 mg/L 300 mg/L

Other leaflets available

Food Additives Guide

Food Labelling

How Safe are Food Additives?

How to Choose Fats and Oils

Further information

For further information contact your local
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or

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<http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au>



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