

American Cancer Summer

The Carcinogen Count Resource Sheet

What's Really in Your Summer Meal?

Hot dogs, sodas, chips, and buns — the staples of an American summer. But what's hiding in plain sight are dozens of known or suspected carcinogens. From nitrates in processed meats to petroleum-based food dyes and artificial preservatives, your summer picnic could come with invisible risks.

Common Carcinogens Found in Everyday Foods

- **Hot Dogs & Processed Meats:** Sodium nitrite, a preservative linked to colorectal cancer.
- **Sodas & Soft Drinks:** Caramel coloring (Class III/IV), linked to potential cancer risk.
- **Chips & Baked Goods:** Acrylamide, formed during high-heat processing.
- **Buns & Bread Products:** Potassium bromate and azodicarbonamide (ADA), banned in many countries.
- **Artificial Colors:** Red 40, Yellow 5, and others — linked to hyperactivity and possible carcinogenicity.

Why Is This Still Allowed?

Many of these ingredients are banned or restricted in other countries, yet remain legal in the U.S. due to lobbying by food manufacturers, limited FDA enforcement, and loopholes in GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) regulations. Corporate profits continue to be prioritized over public health.

How You Can Protect Yourself

1. Read ingredient labels and avoid artificial preservatives, colors, and additives.
2. Choose organic or minimally processed options where possible.
3. Reduce consumption of ultra-processed meats and sugary drinks.
4. Advocate for clearer food labeling and corporate accountability.
5. Educate others — health starts with awareness.

The American summer doesn't have to be a cancer trap. It can be a time of empowerment, change, and better choices — one plate at a time.

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