Sugar/Sweeteners

**SUCRALOSE**
Made from chlorinated sucrose (sugar) molecules, sucralose is an artificial sweetener with no caloric value (because your body can’t digest it). Sucralose is 600 times sweeter than table sugar (three times sweeter than aspartame).

**ASPARTAME**
An artificial sweetener comprised of methanol and several amino acids such as phenylalanine (methanol breaks down into formaldehyde), aspartame has been surrounded by controversy and conflicting studies for the nearly 40 years it’s been used in food products.

**SACCHARIN**
Approximately 300 times sweeter than sugar, this artificial sweetener has been linked to bladder cancer (in rats).

**SUGAR ALCOHOLS**
Xylitol, mannitol, sorbitol, maltitol, erythritol are sugar alcohols used as lower-calorie sweeteners. Sugar alcohols have been found to aggravate bowel sensitivities (such as IBS) in some people.

**MALTODEXTRIN**
Though it can be derived from any starch, this popular sweetener is most commonly made from corn in North America (in Europe, it’s usually made from wheat starch). Absorbed rapidly as glucose, maltodextrin is often the main ingredient in ready-to-drink sport beverages.

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HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP
A cheap sugar replacement ubiquitous in processed food and beverages, high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is a sweetener derived from heavily processed corn starch (often from genetically modified (GMO) corn).

Sodium/Flavor Enhancers

SODIUM CHLORIDE/IODIZED SALT
Used as a flavoring agent and preservative, salt is an important electrolyte with a bad rap earned from extreme over-use in processed foods. Essential for athletes in small, appropriate amounts, sodium overconsumption is linked with high blood pressure and heart disease.

Because the lion’s share of sodium in North American diets comes from processed food, if you’re following the principles of Thrive and eating mostly whole, plant-based foods, you’re less likely to struggle with limiting your daily sodium intake. If and when you choose processed foods, look for those with no more than 140mg/serving, or no more than 1 mg of sodium per calorie. This guideline does not apply if you’re replenishing electrolytes post-workout, however.

MONO SODIUM GLUTAMATE (MSG)
A flavor enhancer comprised of sodium and the amino acid glutamate, MSG may also be listed as “natural flavoring”, hydrolyzed yeast, or hydrolyzed vegetable protein. Those sensitive to MSG may experience neuro-toxic effects such as headaches, mood changes, or nausea.

ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR
Synthesized, imitation flavors are made from a string of unpronounceable chemical compounds, often so concentrated a single teaspoon could flavor a swimming pool.

Sensitivity-Aggravating Ingredients: Wheat, Dairy, Soy or Corn-Based

HYDROLYZED VEGETABLE PROTEIN
This common flavor enhancer can be soy, wheat or corn based. Often containing 10 – 30 per cent MSG, (which imitates the savory flavor (referred to as “umami”) often found in meat products), hydrolyzed vegetable protein is commonly found in heavily processed meat substitutes.

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MODIFIED FOOD STARCH
An emulsifier, stabilizer and thickener, modified food starch is made from chemically treated corn, wheat, potato, rice or tapioca, and is used to protect packaged foods from heat and pH changes during storage.

MODIFIED MILK INGREDIENTS
Isolated from components of whole milk, modified milk ingredients include whey, casein, caseinates, and milk protein concentrate, but can also refer to cultured milk products (like buttermilk, yogurt, or sour cream).

CORN SYRUP SOLIDS
Often used to help maintain moisture content in a food item, corn syrup solids are also used for added sweetness. Corn syrup solids usually contain a large amount of dextrose (see maltodextrin, above).

Colors
Commonly found in empty-calorie processed foods like candies or pastries, artificial colors help make these items visually appealing (though why an electric blue raspberry is considered enticing to eat remains a mystery). Some artificial colors have been linked to hyperactivity and attention disorders.1,2

Common artificial food colors allowed for use in food in the US include:
- FD&C Yellow No. 5 (sometimes listed as tartrazine), and Yellow No. 6
- FD&C Red No. 3 and Red No. 40 (red no. 2 is delisted for use in food)
- FD&C Green No. 3
- FD&C Blue No. 1 and Blue No. 2

Preservatives

SULFITES/SULPHITES
Found most commonly in dried fruits (and some wine), sulfites are a recognized allergen. Sulfites (spelled in Canada and Europe with the ph) are linked to digestive and respiratory complaints. Usually used in compounds with sodium, potassium, or calcium, look for sulfites identified with terms ending in: sulfite/sulphite, bisulfate, metabisulfite, or hydrogen sulfite, or as sulfur dioxide.

(continued on the next page...)
NITRITES/NITRATES
Found most commonly in meat-based products, nitrites and nitrates are used as a preservative that inhibits microbial growth of food spoiling bacteria. However, nitrates are also found in plant-based foods because of fertilizer use.

HYDROGENATED AND PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OILS
A chemical process that reconfigures carbon bonds to convert liquid fats and oils to a solid form (like margarine and vegetable shortening) hydrogenated fats (along with trans fats) have been connected to increased risk of heart disease.

SODIUM BENZOATE
A common preservative often found in prepared salad dressings, juices, carbonated beverages and condiments, sodium benzoate has been studied in conjunction with artificial colors for possible links to attention disorders.

MONO AND DIGLYCERIDES
Often found in processed foods, monoglycerides and diglycerides may be derived from plant or animal oils, or may be synthesized. Monoglycerides and Diglycerides are used as emulsifiers to help keep ingredients (such as oil and water) blended that otherwise don’t blend well. These are also used also to improve consistency in ice creams, and volume in baked goods. On a nutrition facts panel, fat contributed by either of these is not counted in the total fat, saturated fat, or trans fat values.

Sound Scary... (but aren’t!)
Complicated sounding ingredients aren’t always bad for you. Sometimes it’s just the name that seems intimidating. These food ingredients are not aliases for unnecessary additives; rather, they are in many common foods that still meet the Thrive standard for clean eating.

SODIUM BICARBONATE
Baking soda! Used as a leavener or anti-caking agent in powdered ingredients,

MONOCALCIUM PHOSPHATE
Non-aluminum baking powder. Used as a leavening and/or gelling agent in canned fruits and vegetables.

(continued on the next page...)
**XANTHAN GUM**
A thickener and stabilizer commonly found in natural powdered beverage mixes, and used in gluten-free baking to mimic the gummy, stretchy characteristics of gluten, helping provide necessary structure and moisture to flours that would otherwise crumble. Xanthan gum is derived from fermented plant fibers.

**MALIC ACID**
Derived from tart fruits, malic acid helps prevent spoilage and maintain pH. It’s also used together with citric acid to add tartness where this is desired.

**CITRIC ACID**
Found naturally in many fruits, citric acid is added to some products to prevent spoilage or browning, and maintain pH. Citric acid has a sour taste, and is derived by fermenting plant sugars.

**CALCIUM CHLORIDE**
Used for texture and flavor, calcium chloride imparts a salty taste without added sodium. Calcium chloride is sometimes used for electrolyte support as a source of chloride as well.

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For more *Thriving* check out Brendan's Thrive Trilogy of books.

Thrive Foods, Thrive: The Vegan Nutrition Guide, and Thrive Fitness
(In Canada: Whole Foods to Thrive, Thrive Diet, and Thrive Fitness)

USA: Da Capo Press | Canada: Penguin