

Salicylate Sensitivity

What are Salicylates?

Salicylates are a group of organic substances that occur naturally in many fruits, vegetables and herbs. Salicylates are mainly stored in the leaves, roots, seeds, bark and skin of the plant and act as a preservative to delay rotting and a protection mechanism to ward off animals, insects, bacteria and fungi that might attack the plant.

Where are salicylates most commonly found?

Natural Salicylates are most commonly found in healthy wholesome foods with many high and very high salicylate containing foods being popular fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices.

Salicylates are also created synthetically and used as preservatives in processed foods and common products include toothpastes, flavoured sweets and chewing gums etc. They are also found in perfumes and in a variety of medicines such as aspirin, cough mixtures and analgesics.

What is salicylate sensitivity?

Salicylate sensitivity is the inability for the body to process an excessive amount of salicylates at a given time. The amount of salicylates a person can handle at any period varies between individuals and there can be a cumulative effect in the body. A person sensitive to salicylates may react to certain fruits and vegetables or products containing aspirin.

Common symptoms of salicylate sensitivity

Symptoms vary between individuals as can the severity of the reactions. A salicylate sensitivity may show itself at any time throughout a person's life. Common symptomatic reactions include;

- Rashes, hives, tingling /rash on lips
- Symptoms of ADHD / ADD
- Asthma
- Eczema
- Sinusitis
- Rhinitis
- Headaches and migraines
- Stomach aches
- Bloating
- Anxiety, panic attacks
- Sleep disturbances
- Nausea
- Flatulence
- Irritability, restlessness
- Rapid heart beat
- Tinnitus
- Constant clearing of throat
- Joint pain

If you are suffering from some of the above symptoms and feel you may have a salicylate sensitivity, the best way to assess the situation is a trial for two weeks avoiding foods containing very high and high levels of salicylates from the list provided. Symptoms will disappear or greatly reduce if salicylates are a causative factor. Low salicylate foods include all fresh meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, shellfish and cereals.

Salicylate Content of Common Foods

FRUIT					
Negligible	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	
Banana	Pawpaw	Pear – incl. peel	Apple –granny smith	Apricot	Orange
Pear – peeled	Pomegranate	Apple - red	Avocado	Blackberry	Plum
	Apple - golden	Fig	Grapefruit	Blueberry	Prune
		Lemon	Kiwi Fruit	Cherry	Raspberry
		Mango	Mandarin	Cranberry	Rockmelon
			Nectarine	Dates	Strawberry
			Passionfruit	Grapes	Sultana
			Peach	Pineapple	
			Watermelon		

VEGETABLES					
Negligible	Low	Moderate		High	Very High
Bamboo Shoots	Beans - green	Asparagus	Parsnip	Alfalfa sprouts	Capsicum
Beans-dried	Brussel sprouts	Beetroot	Potato - sweet	Chilli	Chicory
Cabbage-green	Cabbage – red	Broccoli	Potato - red	Cucumber	Gherkin
Celery	Chives	Carrot	Pumpkin	Eggplant	Olives
Lentils	Leek	Cauliflower	Spinach	Watercress	Radish
Lettuce-iceberg	Mung beans	Corn	Snow peas	Zucchini	Tomato
Potato- no peel	Peas - green	Lettuce			
	Turnip	Mushrooms			
		Onion			

HERBS AND SPICES					
Negligible	Low	Moderate	High		Very High
Clover	Chives		All spice	Mustard	Aniseed
Fennel	Garlic		Caraway	Nutmeg	Cayenne
Fenugreek	Malt Vinegar		Cardamom	Oregano	Curry
Parsley	Saffron		Cinnamon	Pepper – black	Dill
Sea salt	Soy sauce		Cloves	Pepper – white	Fish paste
	Tandoori		Coriander	Rosemary	Gravy
	Vanilla		Cumin	Tarragon	Sauces
			Ginger	Turmeric	Tomato paste
			Mixed Herbs	Vinegars	

DRINKS					
Negligible		Moderate		High	Very High
Coffee - decaf	Pear juice - fresh	Coffee – regular	Cider	Fruit juices	All other teas
Milo	Gin	Decaf tea	Beer	Champagne	Peppermint tea
Ovaltine	Whiskey	Herbal teas	Sherry		Cordials
Carob	Vodka	Dandelion tea	Brandy		Port
Milk		Coca cola			Wine / Rum

SWEETS					
Negligible	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	
Carob	Caramel	Molasses		Chewing Gum	Licorice
Cocoa	Golden Syrup	Raw Sugar		Fruit flavours	Mints
Maple sugar	Malt extract			Honey	Rice Syrup
White sugar				Jam	