

This table summarizes some common situations when additives are used, but there are many other uses as well.

For more information, visit www.fda.gov and search “Food Ingredients and Colors.”

Why Additives Are Used	Types of Additives and What They Do	Ingredients Commonly Found in Foods
“To maintain product consistency”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emulsifiers to keep products from separating • Thickeners to give products body • Anti-caking agents to keep powders from clumping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mono- and diglycerides, lecithin • Alginate, pectin, gelatin, gums (e.g., xanthan, guar), modified starch • Magnesium silicate, calcium stearate, cornstarch
“To improve or maintain nutritional value”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitamins • Minerals • Chelators to make minerals easier to absorb 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitamin C, thiamin, folic acid, niacin • Iron, calcium, magnesium • EDTA, potassium phosphate, sodium diacetate
“To maintain palatability and wholesomeness”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antimicrobials to prevent mold or yeast growth • Antioxidants to protect color and flavor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propylparaben, sodium benzoate, sodium propionate • BHA/BHT, TBHQ, propyl gallate, ascorbic acid
“To provide leavening or to control acidity/alkalinity”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acidulants to lower the pH • Buffers / Acidity controllers to prevent the pH from changing • Leaveners to give volume to baked goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citric acid, malic acid, fumaric acid, acetic acid • Calcium citrate, phosphates, sodium carbonate • Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), calcium phosphate, sodium acid pyrophosphate, glucono-d-lactone
“To enhance flavor or impart desired color”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweeteners • Non-nutritive sweeteners for low calorie products • Flavor enhancers • Natural colors • Artificial colors (only approved artificial colors can be used) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corn syrup, sugar, fructose • Aspartame, acesulfame K, stevia, saccharin, sucralose • Monosodium glutamate (MSG), salt, disodium inosinate • Annatto extract, caramel, carmine, paprika, turmeric • Blue 1 & 2, Green 3, Red 2, 3 & 40, Yellow 5 & 6

References:

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. 2010. *Code of Federal Regulations*. Title 21. Subchapter B - Food for Human Consumption.

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