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Notice of Modification to the *List of Permitted Preservatives* to Extend the Use of Potassium Sorbate to Oyster-Flavoured Sauces

Notice of Modification – Lists of Permitted Food Additives

Reference Number: NOM/ADM-0189

August 26, 2022



Canada

Summary

Food additives are regulated in Canada under [Marketing Authorizations](#) (MAs) issued by the Minister of Health and the *Food and Drug Regulations* (Regulations). Approved food additives and their permitted conditions of use are set out in the [Lists of Permitted Food Additives](#) that are incorporated by reference in the MAs and published on the Canada.ca website. A petitioner can request that Health Canada approve a new additive, a new source or a new condition of use for an already approved food additive by filing a food additive submission with the Department's Food Directorate. Health Canada uses this premarket approval process to determine whether the scientific data support the safety of food additives when used under specified conditions in foods sold in Canada.

Health Canada's Food Directorate received a food additive submission seeking approval for the use of potassium sorbate, the potassium salt of sorbic acid, as a Class 2 preservative at a maximum level of 1,000 parts per million (ppm) in oyster-flavoured sauce. As oyster-flavoured sauce is considered an unstandardized fish product in Canada, and most Class 2 and Class 3 preservatives are not permitted in unstandardized preparations of fish and meat (Division 21), potassium sorbate was thus not already permitted in such sauce.

Potassium sorbate is permitted for use in Canada as a Class 2 and Class 3 preservative in a variety of foods including the broad category of unstandardized foods, with the exception of unstandardized preparations of meat and meat-by-products ([Division 14](#)), fish and meat ([Division 21](#)) and poultry meat and poultry meat by-products ([Division 22](#)), at a maximum level of 1,000 ppm.

The Food Directorate recently permitted the use of benzoic acid and its salts as Class 2 preservatives in oyster-flavoured sauce¹ based on the fact that there was no scientific evidence to soundly rationalize the establishment of the above mentioned exceptions for Class 2 preservatives in certain types of unstandardized foods. Therefore, Health Canada has modified Part 2 of the [List of Permitted Preservatives](#) to extend the use of potassium sorbate by adding the entry shown below to the list (bold font not used in the List).

Modification to Part 2 of the *List of Permitted Preservatives*

| Item No. | Column 1 Additive | Column 2 Permitted in or Upon | Column 3 Maximum Level of Use and Other Conditions |
|----------|-------------------|---|--|
| P.4 | Potassium Sorbate | (2) Unstandardized oyster-flavoured sauces | (2) 1,000 p.p.m., calculated as sorbic acid |

Rationale

The department had previously concluded that there was no scientific evidence to soundly rationalize the establishment of exceptions for the use of benzoic acid and its salts² in certain types of unstandardized fish,

¹ See the [Notice of Modification to the List of Permitted Preservatives to Enable the Use of Benzoic Acid and its Salts in Oyster Flavoured Sauce – Reference Number: NOM/ADM-0147](#) published on 2020-05-05.

² *Idem*.

meat and poultry products. Therefore, the Department has extended the requested use of potassium sorbate by adding the entry to Item P.4 of Part 2 of the [List of Permitted Preservatives](#) as shown in the above table.

Other Relevant Information

Food additives and other ingredients generally must be declared in the list of ingredients on the label of pre-packaged foods sold in Canada. Unstandardized oyster-flavoured sauce containing potassium sorbate will need to have the potassium sorbate declared in the list of ingredients. This will alert individuals following a low potassium diet to the presence of the additive in this food. Manufacturers who use potassium sorbate should make nutrition information available for foods containing this additive that may not be pre-packaged when sold (e.g., food that is prepared in a grocery store for sale from one of its specialty counter).

Food additives such as potassium sorbate are required to meet food-grade specifications set out in Part B of the Regulations, where such specifications exist, or those set out in the most recent edition of the *Food Chemicals Codex* or the *Combined Compendium of Food Additive Specifications*. The *Food Chemicals Codex* is a compendium of standards for purity and identity for food ingredients, including food additives, published by the United States Pharmacopeial Convention. Specifications in the *Combined Compendium of Food Additive Specifications* are prepared by the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Implementation and Enforcement

The above modification came into force **August 26, 2022**, the day it was published in Part 2 of the [List of Permitted Preservatives](#).

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for the enforcement of the *Food and Drugs Act* and its associated regulations with respect to foods.

Contact Information

Health Canada's Food Directorate is committed to reviewing new scientific information on the safety in use of any permitted food additive, including potassium sorbate. Anyone wishing to submit an inquiry or new scientific information on the use of this additive may do so in writing, by regular mail or electronically. If you wish to contact the Food Directorate electronically, please use the words "**potassium sorbate (NOM-0189)**" in the subject line of your e-mail.

[Bureau of Chemical Safety, Food Directorate](#)

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