

Preserving food and health: Understanding the use of anti-microbial preservatives.

Somporn Chua*

Department of Biology, Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Tanjung Malim, Malaysia

Introduction

Anti-microbial preservatives are a common ingredient in many processed and packaged foods. These additives are designed to prevent the growth of bacteria, mold, and other microorganisms that can spoil food and cause illness. However, there is growing concern about the potential health risks associated with these preservatives, and whether they are truly necessary for maintaining food safety. In this article, we'll take a closer look at anti-microbial preservatives, their uses, and the potential risks and benefits associated with their use [1].

What are anti-microbial preservatives?

Anti-microbial preservatives are chemicals that are added to food to prevent the growth of bacteria, mold, and other microorganisms. They work by disrupting the cell membranes of these microorganisms, making it difficult for them to survive and multiply. Common anti-microbial preservatives include sodium benzoate, potassium sorbate, and calcium propionate, among others [2].

Uses of anti-microbial preservatives

Anti-microbial preservatives are used in a wide range of processed and packaged foods, including baked goods, dairy products, meat products, and beverages. They are also commonly used in cosmetics, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals. These preservatives help to extend the shelf life of these products, reducing the risk of spoilage and ensuring that they remain safe to consume or use.

Potential risks and benefits

While anti-microbial preservatives are generally considered safe for consumption at the levels used in food products, there is growing concern about their potential health risks. Some studies have suggested that these preservatives may be linked to allergic reactions, asthma, and other health problems. Additionally, there is concern that these preservatives may be contributing to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, which can be difficult to treat with conventional antibiotics.

Despite these concerns, there are also potential benefits associated with the use of anti-microbial preservatives. For example, these preservatives can help to reduce food waste

and improve food security by extending the shelf life of food products. Additionally, they can help to prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses, which can be particularly dangerous for vulnerable populations like young children and elderly adults.

Alternatives to anti-microbial preservatives

For consumers who are concerned about the potential risks associated with anti-microbial preservatives, there are a number of alternatives available. For example, some manufacturers are now using natural preservatives like vinegar, lemon juice, and salt to help preserve their products. Additionally, some products are now being sold in packaging that has been specially designed to prevent the growth of bacteria, mold, and other microorganisms [3].

Anti-microbial preservatives are a common ingredient in many processed and packaged foods, and can help to improve food safety and extend the shelf life of these products. However, there is growing concern about their potential health risks, and whether they are truly necessary for maintaining food safety. Consumers who are concerned about these preservatives can take steps to reduce their exposure, including choosing products with natural preservatives or special packaging, and being mindful of the types of foods they consume. Ultimately, the use of anti-microbial preservatives is a complex issue that requires careful consideration of both the potential risks and benefits [4].

Anti-microbial preservatives are a commonly used ingredient in many processed and packaged foods, and play an important role in maintaining food safety and preventing foodborne illness. However, concerns about their potential health risks and impact on antibiotic resistance have led some consumers to seek out alternatives or products that do not contain these additives. Consumers who are concerned about these preservatives can take steps to reduce their exposure, including choosing products with natural preservatives or special packaging, and being mindful of the types of foods they consume. Additionally, regulatory agencies and labelling requirements can help to promote transparency and accountability in the food industry, and ensure that consumers have access to safe and healthy food products [5].

*Correspondence to: Somporn Chua, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science and Mathematics, Tanjung Malim, Malaysia, E-mail: somporn@fsm.ups.edu.my

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