

# AB 418: Chemicals in Food

California **Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel** (D-San Fernando Valley) has introduced a first-in-the-nation bill to ban some of the most harmful food additives. If passed, it would bar titanium dioxide, propyl paraben, brominated vegetable oil, Red No. 3 and potassium bromate from candy and ice cream, cookies and other baked goods, soda and other popular food products sold in California.

Each of these chemicals is known to have well-documented health risks and is either already prohibited or restricted from use in processed food for sale in the EU.

## Why are these harmful chemicals still used in food sold in California and the rest of the U.S.?

| CHEMICAL   | HEALTH HARM   | PRODUCTS THAT MAY CONTAIN FOOD ADDITIVES*                       | FUNCTION                       |
|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Brominated vegetable oil   | Harm to the nervous system                              | Soda, sports drinks   | Emulsifier                     |
| Potassium bromate  | Increased risk of cancer                                | Bread, noodles, dough-based products                            | Dough conditioning             |
| Propyl paraben   | Endocrine disruption                                    | Corn tortillas  | Antimicrobials (preservatives) |
| Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA); butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT); propyl gallate; tertbutylhydroquinone (TBHQ) | Increased risk of cancer<br>Change to the immune system | Processed meat, ready-to-eat cereal, flour-based snacks         | Antioxidants (preservatives)   |
| Red 3  | Neurobehavioral problems in children                    | Candy, ready-to-eat baked goods, chips and snacks, cereal, soda | Synthetic colorants            |
| Titanium dioxide   | Change to the immune system in the digestive tract      | Candy, ready-to-eat baked goods, ice cream                      | Mineral colorants              |

\* These are the most common categories where food additives can be found. The food additives included in this table can be found in many different products, including some not listed here. The only way to know whether a specific product contains a particular ingredient is to read the ingredient label.

## Food packaging chemicals that can harm health

| CHEMICAL   | HEALTH HARM  |
|------------|--|
| BPA        | Endocrine disruptor  |
| PFAS       | Harm to the immune system and the developing fetus, increased risk of cancer |
| Phthalates | Endocrine disruptors   |

