

Food additives

The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code is intended to implement uniform food standards across all Australian states and territories and New Zealand. One of its requirements is for food labels to list all ingredients in descending order of proportion by weight. More information on the Code can be found at www.foodstandards.gov.au.¹

Food additives are usually intentionally added to achieve certain technological functions. They are required to be identified by their class or functional name (e.g. thickener, antioxidant, colour) and by an

individual name or code number. The numbers used are based on an international system for identifying food additives; they replace long names on labels while still providing consumers with adequate information about the food additive's presence.¹

Adverse reactions to additives in foods or medicines may include hives, headaches, mouth ulcers, nausea and asthma. Pharmacists can use the following list when assisting people with known hypersensitivities to identify products which are likely to cause reactions.²

Table F.5 List of food additives

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Code number	Prescribed name
100	Curcumin or Turmeric (colour)
101	Riboflavin or Riboflavin 5'-phosphate sodium (colour)
102	Tartrazine (colour)
103	Alkanet or Alkannin (colour)
104	Quinoline yellow (colour)
110	Sunset yellow FCF (colour)
120	Carmines or Carminic acid or Cochineal (colour)
122	Azorubine or Carmoisine (colour)
123	Amaranth (colour)
124	Ponceau 4R (colour)
127	Erythrosine (colour)
129	Allura red AC (colour)
132	Indigotine (colour)
133	Brilliant blue FCF (colour)
140	Chlorophyll (colour)
141	Chlorophyll-copper complex (colour)
142	Green S (colour)
143	Fast green FCF (colour)
150a	Caramel I (colour)
150b	Caramel II (colour)
150c	Caramel III (colour)
150d	Caramel IV (colour)
151	Brilliant black BN or Brilliant black PN (colour)
153	Carbon black or vegetable carbon (colour)
155	Brown HT (colour)
160a	Carotene (colour)
160b	Annatto extracts (colour)
160c	Paprika oleoresins (colour)
160d	Lycopene (colour)
160e	β -apo-8' Carotenal (colour)
160f	β -apo-8' Carotenoic acid or methyl ethyl ester (colour)
161a	Flavoxanthin (colour)

Code number	Prescribed name
161b	Lutein (colour)
161c	Kryptoxanthin (colour)
161d	Rubixanthin (colour)
161e	Violoxanthin (colour)
161f	Rhodoxanthin (colour)
162	Beet red (colour)
163	Anthocyanins or Grape skin extract or Blackcurrant extract (colour)
164	Saffron or Crocetin or Crocin (colour)
170	Calcium carbonate (colour, anti-caking agent)
171	Titanium dioxide (colour)
172	Iron oxide (colour)
173	Aluminium (colour)
174	Silver (colour)
175	Gold (colour)
181	Tannic acid or tannins (colour, emulsifier, stabiliser, thickener)
200	Sorbic acid (preservative)
201	Sodium sorbate (preservative)
202	Potassium sorbate (preservative)
203	Calcium sorbate (preservative)
210	Benzoic acid (preservative)
211	Sodium benzoate (preservative)
212	Potassium benzoate (preservative)
213	Calcium benzoate (preservative)
216	Propylparaben or Propyl-p-hydroxy-benzoate (preservative)
218	Methylparaben or Methyl-p-hydroxy-benzoate (preservative)
220	Sulfur dioxide (preservative)
221	Sodium sulphite (preservative)