**Wake Up America, Your Food is Banned in 30 Countries**

Many people believe that the United States has the strictest regulations on food standards in the world. That the FDA closely regulates the ingredients in our food, and the rest of the world follows the determinations of the FDA.

Think about that – ingredients that are deemed so unsafe that other countries have banned them, are freely allowed to be put into the American food system.

You might be thinking, why is that the case? Doesn’t the FDA review all ingredients and all foods to make sure they are safe? No, they don’t actually. And there are multiple reasons why.

**Why does the United States lag behind other countries in terms of food safety?**

1. **Lobbying has a huge impact on policy**

“The European Union is more conservative in the way they regulate food additives”, states Sheela Sathyanarayana, MD, associate professor of pediatrics and adjunct associate professor within the department of environmental and occupational health sciences at the University of Washington in Seattle. Dr. Sathyanarayana currently serves on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Scientific Advisory Board for the Toxics Substances Control Act.

“Another difference between the United States and Europe is that the food industry has a very strong lobbying presence in the United States. A lot of times those voices are really heard, and they help drive the creation of regulation and policy that exists around these kinds of additives,” says Sathyanarayana.

Three of the biggest lobbying firms in the US work for the food industry. Pepsi spends over $9m a year lobbying. In essence, the corporations that are incentivized to keep their costs down and use harmful ingredients are directly affecting policy. This type of political maneuvering doesn’t just affect the FDA, The American Dietetic Association gets paid by companies like Coke and Mars Wriggly(world’s largest manufacturer of chocolate, chewing gum, mints, and candy) to help write their guidelines and teach seminars every year.

The health of the people are taking a back seat to corporate interests.

1. **The GRAS loophole**

The GRAS loophole is a loophole that corporations exploit to “self certify” the safety of additives and chemicals they put into the food system. This loophole was created in 1958 and hasn’t been changed by the government since. [GRAS is an acronym for Generally Recognized as Safe.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=b85a8f2916&e=2a3afde4f2) According to [EWG](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=d87a0c2a1f&e=2a3afde4f2), “More than 10,000 chemicals are allowed for use in food sold in the U.S. Nearly 99 percent of those introduced since 2000 were approved by the food and chemical industry, not the Food and Drug Administration, the agency tasked with ensuring our food supply is safe.”

***0% of food safety decisions were made independently between 1997-2012. All GRAS determinations were made by the manufacturer, the company incentivized to sell more goods cheaper.***

According to Thomas Galligan, the principal scientist for food additives and supplements at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, or CSPI, “The food industry is allowed to self-determine that a substance is generally recognized as safe,” allowing it to bypass the Food and Drug Administration, he said, adding that the European Union has no equivalent process.

This GRAS loophole means that ingredients you think were vetted by the government or a third party weren’t. The manufacturer who is selling you the good “self certified” it. Seems legit.

1. **The US doesn’t have a system in place for re-evaluation.**

The European Union has a policy in place to re-evaluate old determinations every so often. The United States has no such process. If something was approved in 1940, there is no process to re-evaluate the safety of that ingredient on a regular basis.

For example:The safety of Yellow No. 5 was last reviewed by the FDA in 1969 and that of Red No. 40 in 1971. These evaluations are clearly outdated and not based on current science.

1. **The EU is more concerned with the possibility of sickness; the U.S. is much less strict.**

The EU, and other countries, determine safety on the “possibility” of sickness. Meaning is it possible that someone can become sick by this ingredient. The US is much more relaxed. The FDA determines safety on the “probability” of sickness. This seems like a small difference but it leads to vastly different policies and a lot more harmful ingredients leaking into the American food system. It seems that ingredients in the US are innocent until proven guilty when it really should be the opposite. After all, people’s lives are on the line.

**A bright spot…**

Recently, [California has moved to ban 5 ingredients linked to serious health problems.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=730bc7c572&e=2a3afde4f2) [Bill A.B. 418](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=e215f52297&e=2a3afde4f2) would ban brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propylparaben, Red Dye No. 3 and titanium dioxide. All of these substances have already been banned by European regulators (besides the small exception of red no.3 in candied cherries).

**Here’s a list of some of the most problematic ingredients that are banned in other countries but allowed in the US:**

1. Artificial food colorings (Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 3, Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6)

Several artificial food colorings that are banned in the EU are still allowed in the US, including Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 3, Red 3, Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6. These are pervasive in the American food system, appearing in many foods including Skittles, Doritos, Pop Tarts, Gatorade, Lucky Charms, Tostitos Queso, Pillsbury Crescent Rolls, and Little Debbie’s snacks. The California Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard released a report in 2021 concluding that synthetic food dyes are associated with adverse neurobehavioral outcomes in children. The safety of Yellow No. 5 was last reviewed by the FDA in 1969 and that of Red No. 40 in 1971. Red dye no. 3 is on the list of [banned ingredients in California’s bill AB 418.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=1c9011c965&e=2a3afde4f2)

1. Brominated vegetable oil (BVO)

BVO, a chemical that is used as an emulsifier in sports drinks and citrus-flavored drinks such as Sun Drop, is banned in the EU because it contains bromine, the element found in [brominated flame retardants](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=48d965b007&e=2a3afde4f2), which can build up in the body and potentially lead to memory loss as well as skin and nerve problems, and organ damage. It was approved by the [FDA in 1977.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=7b42ebc204&e=2a3afde4f2)

1. rBGH and rBST

Recombinant bovine growth hormone and recombinant bovine somatotropin are hormones that are given to cows to increase milk production. Milk in the United States, unless marked otherwise, is treated with either rBST or rBGH, which are artificial hormones that stimulate milk production. [rBGH can lead to elevated levels of IFG-1 in milk consumers which has been linked to breast, prostate, and colon cancers. They are banned in the EU but are still legal in the US.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=3e9ebea717&e=2a3afde4f2" \t "_blank)

1. Potassium bromate

Potassium bromate is a food additive that is used to strengthen dough and improve its elasticity. The chemical is also linked to cancer, nervous system damage, and kidney damage. It is banned in the EU but is still legal in the US. This ingredient is on the list of proposed [banned ingredients in California’s bill AB 418.](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=b5b31a8ec2&e=2a3afde4f2)

1. Potassium Iodate

[Potassium Iodate](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=7f048dec07&e=2a3afde4f2) is often used as a dough strengthener. A potential carcinogen, [The World Health Organization](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=77ecd4028a&e=2a3afde4f2) has warned against the use of Potassium Iodate in flour since 1965.

1. BHA and BHT

Butylated hydroxyanisole and butylated hydroxytoluene are antioxidants that are added to food to prevent spoilage. In 2011, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services stated that BHA “[is reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=9f9cbe878f&e=2a3afde4f2).” Suspected to be carcinogens, they are banned in the EU but are still legal in the US. Common foods like Frosted Flakes, Stove Top Stuffing, Honey Bunches of Oats, Wheat Thins, Farmer John Breakfast Sausage Links, and Rice Krispies contain these.

1. Azodicarbonamide (ADA)

A chemical used as a dough conditioner in breads, rolls, and other baked goods. Fun fact, it’s also used to make yoga mats.The [World Health Organization](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=b5508fa980&e=2a3afde4f2) reported that the chemical may cause asthma and other respiratory issues. It is banned in the EU but is still legal in the US.

1. BPA

Bisphenol A, a chemical used in plastic containers and can linings, is banned in the EU for use in baby bottles and sippy cups but is still legal in the US

1. Arsenic

Inorganic arsenic, a toxic substance that can contaminate rice and other foods, is allowed at higher levels in the US than in the EU.

1. Carrageenan

A thickening and stabilizing agent derived from seaweed and can have a negative effect on the human digestive system. It is banned in baby formula and organic foods in the EU but is still legal in the US. It is in popular foods like Drumsticks, Dannon Yogurt, and Ben and Jerry’s Ice Cream.

1. Olestra

It’s an additive usually found in diet versions of chips and fries. It has been linked to [gastrointestinal disease](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=76c9b438f0&e=2a3afde4f2). It is banned in Canada and the EU, but still allowed in the US.

1. Titanium Dioxide

On the list of proposed banned ingredients in California’s bill AB 418, this additive is used for coloring in candies such as skittles and starburst as well as soups, spreads, and other foods. This substance has been shown to be genotoxic, which means it can cause DNA damage, leading to cancer and other health problems. [The European Food and Safety Administration released a statement in 2021](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=025e28226d&e=2a3afde4f2) stating that it no longer considered titanium dioxide safe when used as a food additive.

1. Propylparaben

Another ingredient on the list of proposed [banned ingredients in California’s bill AB 418](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=202a8ed7a4&e=2a3afde4f2), propylparaben is commonly used as a preservative in many foods including trail mix, baked goods, tortillas, and sausages. Research has shown that exposure to propylparaben may be linked to [breast cancer](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=954c32962f&e=2a3afde4f2). In 2006, the EU banned propylparaben in the use of food and in 2015, banned it in cosmetic products. It is still allowed in the US.

**Chemicals, Antibiotics, and GMOs**

1. Farm animal antibiotics

The use of antibiotics for growth promotion in farm animals is banned in the EU, whereas in the US it is still allowed.

1. Synthetic hormones in beef and dairy

The use of synthetic hormones to promote growth and increase milk production in cattle is banned in the EU, but is still legal in the US.

1. GMOs

While GMOs are not entirely banned in the EU, they are subject to much stricter regulation than in the US. Most soy, sugar beets, corn, canola, cotton, and alfalfa are genetically modified in the US.

1. Glyphosate

Glyphosate has been directly linked with [doubling cancer risk](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=006d20c58a&e=2a3afde4f2), which is why it has been banned in [many countries](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=74781e3a20&e=2a3afde4f2), including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and the United Kingdom. Glyphosate is the primary ingredient in Roundup. Bayer, the maker of Roundup has been involved in lawsuits with over 13,000 people over glyphosate causing them cancer. It is currently still legal in the US.

1. Chloramphenicol

A broad-spectrum antibiotic that is used in animal husbandry in the US but is banned in the EU due to concerns about its potential to cause aplastic anemia.

1. Genetically modified salmon

The sale and production of genetically modified salmon is banned in the EU, but it is legal in the US.

1. Carbon monoxide-treated meat

Carbon monoxide is sometimes used to preserve the color of meat, but it is banned in the EU due to concerns about the potential to mask spoilage

1. Chlorine-washed chicken

In the US, chicken is sometimes washed with chlorine to kill bacteria. This practice is banned in the EU.

1. Ractopamine

A feed additive used to promote lean muscle growth in pigs and cattle. Because it has been linked to [cardiovascular damage](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=caeb49ef55&e=2a3afde4f2) among other health problems in humans, it is banned in 122 countries. It is still legal in the US.

1. Neonicotinoid pesticides

A class of pesticides that have been linked to bee deaths and are banned in the EU but still legal in the US.

1. Roxarsone

The arsenic based drug is used to [increase the pink coloring of raw](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=107a9791b9&e=2a3afde4f2) chicken meat, speed up the growth of chickens before slaughter, and prevent parasites in the chicken’s stomach. [Research](https://isitclean.us21.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d40b25b261d2221e376f5a0ed&id=911a19d086&e=2a3afde4f2) shows that chronic exposure to arsenic can lead to anemia, skin lesions, kidney damage. The EU banned the use of arsenic-based drugs.

Here are two good examples of how different food is in other countries compared to America:



