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Nutrition Notes – October 2008

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Are Sulfites In Your Food Causing Problems?

Sodium sulfite is a chemical that is naturally present and/or used in food processing as a preservative and sanitizing agent. It prevents bacterial growth and the browning of exposed foods. It also prevents the growth of undesirable microorganisms during fermentation and food processing. Many people are sensitive to this compound. A person can develop sensitivity to sulfites at any time in life; the cause of sensitivity is unknown. For those sensitive to sulfites, a reaction can be mild or life threatening. Reactions can include headaches, diarrhea, nausea, skin rash, swelling, and wheezing.

The FDA has banned the use of sulfites on fruits and vegetables that are eaten raw, such as lettuce or apples. Manufacturers are required to label the use of sulfites in their processed products and list the compounds on their product labels.

Sulfites can be found in a variety of cooked and processed foods even though they are no longer used on most fresh foods. They occur naturally in the process of making wine and beer.

Avoiding foods that contain or are likely to contain sulfites is the only way to prevent a reaction. If you are sensitive be sure to read the labels on all food items. When eating out, ask if sulfites are used or added to food before or during preparation.

Sulfite-containing ingredients to look for include: Sulfur dioxide, Potassium bisulfite or potassium metabisulfite, Sodium bisulfite, sodium metabisulfite or sodium sulfite.

Food sources of sodium sulfite include: Sugars, Syrups, Frozen apples, Dried fruit, Peeled potatoes, Maraschino cherries, Condiments, Frozen vegetables, **Wine**, Fresh non-organic grapes.

If you have ever suffered a reaction after ingesting a food, please give us a call! We are the food sensitivity experts.

For more information contact Donna Wolf RD, CLT at 858-335-2140 or visit www.healthydirectionspoway.com.