

SULFITES: WHAT ARE THEY?

Sulfites can occur naturally. Minimal natural sulfites appear during the fermentation of wine. It is also produced by the human body at the level of about one gram per day.

The Food and Drug Administration, however, estimates that one out of a hundred people is sulfite-sensitive, and five percent of those also suffer from asthma. A person can develop sulfite sensitivity at any point in life and, at the present time, it is anybody's guess what triggers the sensitivity. Consumption of food preserved with sulfites is generally not a problem except for a few people who are deficient in the natural enzyme to break it down.

Some people experience unexplained allergic symptoms during or after drinking alcohol. The common question is "Can I be allergic to alcohol?" Although alcohol can be the culprit, it usually is not, unless a person has consumed more than his/her body can tolerate. The culprits are usually the additives used in the manufacturing process. Some of the possible offenders include: Brewers yeast, corn, eggs, grapes, molds, sulfites, and pesticides.

What are sulfites? Sulfites are inorganic salts that have antioxidant and preservative properties. Many compounds capable of producing sulfite, called

sulfating agents, have been used more than 2000 years to prevent food spoilage and discoloration. Sulfites are sulfur based preservatives that are used to prevent black spots on shrimp and lobster, inhibit the growth of microorganisms in fermented foods such as wine, condition dough, and maintain the stability and potency of certain medications. Sulfites can also be used to bleach food starches, to prevent rust and scale in boiler water that is used to steam food, and even in the production of cellophane for food packaging. Sulfites can be listed on a product label as potassium bisulfite, sodium sulfite, sodium bisulfite, metabisulfite, sulfur dioxide, or any ingredient that ends in sulfite.

Sulfite treatment levels in foods vary widely. Residual levels do not usually exceed several hundred parts per million (ppm) but may approach 1,000 ppm in certain fruit and vegetable products. In the United States, the law states that wines cannot contain more than 350 ppm sulfites. Wines with more than 10 ppm must have a warning label claiming "Contains Sulfites".

EcoVine Wine was created to address these concerns! All of our wines have been grown without the use of pesticides, fungicides, or chemicals of any kind. Our organically grown wines have been bottled using "minimal sulfites" (usually less than 30 ppm) or using "no sulfites".



LOOK FOR SULFITE LEVELS

Sulfites can occur naturally in foods or are added to enhance food products. There is a variety of foods that contain sulfites. Some of them include baked goods, dehydrated foods, many canned sea foods such as tuna, some frozen foods, soup mixes, jams, canned vegetables, pickled foods, gravies, dried fruit, potato chips, trail mix, beer, wine, vegetable juices, bottled lemon juice, bottled lime juice, tea, condiments, molasses, fresh or frozen shrimp, guacamole, maraschino cherries, and dehydrated, and pre-cut or peeled potatoes.

Vicky Lorelli Founder 