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# Is Sodium Hexametaphosphate Bad For You?

Also Known As: SHMP

22k Shares



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## Short answer

Frequently consuming sodium hexametaphosphate can result in a wide range of unwanted side effects including an increased risk for pancreatic cancer. It's best to avoid this additive. If you are only consuming it once in a blue moon, you shouldn't have anything to worry about.

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## Long answer

Sodium hexametaphosphate is primarily used as an emulsifier / texturizer in many foods and as an anti-staining agent in toothpaste. The FDA (<http://www.fda.gov/>) recognizes this ingredient as "generally safe", yet warns you that excessive consumption should be avoided due to possible side effects. Let's dig a little deeper and find out exactly what this additive may be doing to your health.

When you hear hexametaphosphate, you may be thinking phosphorus? This ingredient does, in fact, contain phosphorus, which is an essential nutrient for many reasons; improved digestion, bone formation, cellular repair, etc. The problem here is if you ingest sodium hexametaphosphate without the proper balance of other minerals in your body, it can negatively impact your bones, kidneys, and heart. When tested on lab animals, swollen kidneys, the loss of bone calcium, unusual muscle fiber changes, extreme skin irritations, and other precursors to cancer were seen.

Short-term side effects of sodium hexametaphosphate include headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and gastrointestinal irritation. It is also possible some may have an allergic reaction to the phosphate, most commonly resulting in mild chest pain and general respiratory irritation.

In conclusion, this food additive - also used in toothpaste and ..umm.. the production of glass and ceramic products - should be avoided. If you are only consuming sodium hexametaphosphate every once in a while, don't worry - you will be fine. Real problems arise when it becomes a part of your diet.

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## Possible short-term side effects

- headache
  - nausea
  - vomiting
  - dizziness
  - gastrointestinal irritation
  - allergic reaction
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## Possible long-term side effects

- pancreatic cancer
- loss of calcium
- kidney problems
- skin irritation

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## 🍴 Commonly found in

- cheese powders / dip
- whipped toppings
- processed maple syrup
- roast beef
- jellies / jams (<https://www.isitbadforyou.com/questions/is-jelly-bad-for-you>)
- salad dressings
- cereals
- packaged egg whites
- toothpaste (</questions/is-toothpaste-bad-for-you>)
- propel (</questions/is-propel-bad-for-you>)

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## 👍 Benefits

- helps prevent cavities
- helps preserve various foods

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