



**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online <https://ksre-learn.com/chemicals-in-food>

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What chemicals are in my food?

K-State food scientist shares tips to navigate chemicals in food

By Maddy Rohr, K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. – All food, like most everything else in the world, is made of chemicals. Kansas State University food scientist Karen Blakeslee said what matters is how much a person eats or drinks.

“Bottom line, it’s the amount that counts,” Blakeslee said. “Foods contain nutrients, which are chemicals and are important for a healthy, balanced diet.”

Reading or hearing about chemicals in food, when combined with words like ‘toxic,’ ‘extremely dangerous’ and ‘cancer-causing’ may be scary, especially if you aren’t getting all the facts, she added.

Here are a few points to help navigate information about chemicals in food:

- Complete information from a credible medical or scientific source would likely explain how much of the chemical is in the food, how much of a food someone actually eats or drinks and whether the chemical is present at a level that is harmful to people.
- Chemical names may sound complicated, but that does not mean they are unsafe; some ingredients may be familiar. For example, tocopherols are vitamin E; sodium chloride is salt; and dihydrogen monoxide is water.
- Some chemicals safely used in food may have other non-food uses. For example, vinegar is used as a household cleaner, but also is used in small amounts in food. If used in food, a chemical must meet the FDA’s safety standard.

“You have choices to make. Eat a variety of nutrient-dense foods to have a well balanced diet,” Blakeslee said.

Blakeslee, who also is coordinator of [K-State’s Rapid Response Center for Food Science](#), publishes a monthly newsletter called [You Asked It!](#) that provides numerous tips on food safety.

More information is also available from [local extension offices](#) in Kansas.

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
Rapid Response Center, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu>

You Asked It! newsletter, <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/newsletter>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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