

# The Ruling Islamic Law About Food Additives And E-Numbering

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## Abstract

Food additives are substances added intentionally to foodstuffs to perform certain technological functions, for example to colour, sweeten or preserve, Especially in the European countries food additives are often referred to by E numbers because in the Europe additives are numbered with the prefix E. Whereas Halal food processing ingredients must come from a halal source and the processing must be carried out in accordance with Islamic regulations. It is important to ensure that food additives are from acceptable sources and processed according to halal requirements without the use haram sources. The legal Islamic maxims (Qawaid Fiqhiyyah-القواعد الفقهية) give to a Muslim society some basic teachings in the light of Quran and Sunnah to understand and refrain upcoming conditions. As It helps the competent jurists to come out with ijtihaad (when there are no basic principles are found in primary Islamic sources) and achieve the objectives of Sharia's aims and goals (Maqasid of Sharia-مقاصد الشريعة). So here we mention some basic legal Islamic maxims which explain the above mention topic "The sharia's ruling about food additives and E-Numbering", That helps the people to what type of food should be eatable and which one is to be avoid. To make this type of awareness about the food among the people is so much important because among the many reasons behind coronavirus, one of the most common reasons is that the people are not avoiding the harmful and spicy food which harms their health indirectly.

**Key Words:** Food, Health, Good, Haram, Number, Get, Avoid.

## Food additives definition

According to the researchers: "Food additives are substances added to food to preserve flavor or enhance taste, appearance, or other sensory qualities.

Some additives have been used for centuries as part of an effort to preserve food, for example vinegar (pickling), salt (salting) s moke (smoking), sugar (crystallization),

etc. This allows for longer-lasting foods such as bacon, sweets or wines”.<sup>1</sup>

## History

“With the advent of processed foods in the second half of the twentieth century, many additives have been introduced, of both natural and artificial origin. Food additives also include substances that may be introduced to food indirectly (called "indirect additives") in the manufacturing process, through packaging, or during storage or transport”.<sup>2</sup>

## Or

According to WHO (World Health Organization) the food additives are: “The substances that are added to food to maintain or improve the safety, freshness, taste, texture, or appearance of food are known as food additives”.<sup>3</sup>

## History

“Some food additives have been in use for centuries for preservation – such as salt (in meats such as bacon or dried fish), sugar (in marmalade), or sulfur dioxide (in wine)”.<sup>4</sup>

## Food numbering

According to Codex Alimentarius: “To regulate these additives and inform consumers, each additive is assigned a unique number called an "E number", which is used in Europe for all approved additives. This numbering scheme has now been adopted and extended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to internationally identify all additives”.<sup>5</sup>

## E-number

According to the European food additives regulation: “E numbers ("E" stands for "Europe") are codes for substances used as food additives, including those found naturally in many foods such as vitamin C, for use within the European Union (EU)<sup>6</sup> and European Free Trade Association (EFTA).<sup>7</sup> According to the

food additives and ingredients association UK & Ireland: “Commonly found on food labels, their safety assessment and approval are the responsibility of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).<sup>8</sup> Dr. David Jukes says: “Having a single unified list for food additives was first agreed upon in 1962 with food coloring. In 1964, the directives for preservatives were added, in 1970 antioxidants were added, in 1974 emulsifiers, stabilizers, thickeners and gelling agents were added as well”.<sup>9</sup>

## E-Numbering schemes

“The numbering scheme follows that of the International Numbering System (INS) as determined by the Codex Alimentarius committee,<sup>10</sup> though only a subset of the INS additives is approved for use in the European Union as food additives. Outside the European continent plus Russia, E numbers are also encountered on food labeling in other jurisdictions, including the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand,<sup>11</sup> Malaysia, Hong Kong and India,<sup>12</sup> They are increasingly, though still rarely, found on North American packaging.”<sup>13</sup>

## Colloquial use

“In some European countries, "E number" is sometimes used informally as a pejorative term for artificial food additives, and products may promote themselves as "free of E numbers". This is incorrect, because many components of natural foods have assigned E numbers (and the number is a synonym for the chemical component), e.g. vitamin C (E300) and lycopene (E160d), found in carrots.”<sup>14</sup>

## Food Numbers list with and without E Prefix

Due to lengthening the article, we only share the relevant links here to know about

the concern items briefly. <https://dermnetnz.org/topics/food-additives-and-e-numbers>.<sup>15</sup>

### Islamic teachings About Food Additives

The legal Islamic maxims (Qawaid Fiqhiyyah-القواعد الفقهية) give to a Muslim society some basic teachings in the light of Quran and Sunnah to understand and refrain upcoming conditions. As It helps the competent jurists to come out with ijtihad (when there are no basic principles are found in primary Islamic sources) and achieve the objectives of Sharia's aims and goals (Maqasid of Sharia-مقاصد الشريعة). Here we mention some basic legal Islamic maxims which explain the above mention topic "The sharia's ruling about food additives and E-Numbering". These universal legal maxims are mentioned as under:

1. Al-darurat tubihu al-mahzurat-الضرورات تبيح المحظورات (Necessity may authorize forbidden acts)
2. Al-umuru bi-maqasidiha-الأمر بمقاصدها (Acts are judged by the intention behind them).
3. Al-dararu yuzal-الضرر يزال (Harm must be eliminated).
4. Al-yaqinu la yazulu bil-shakk-اليقين لا يزول بالشك (Certainty is not overruled by doubt)
5. Al-mashaqqatu tajlibu al-taysir-المشقة تجلب التيسير (Hardship begets facility)
6. Al-a'datu muhakkamah-العادة محكمة (Custom can be the basis of judgment).<sup>16</sup>

"Hence, Islamic Legal maxims can be used as reliable argument particularly when there are difference opinions between Muslim scholars with regards on particular issues. For example, in the case of the halal status the swine and its derivatives, some of Juristic scholars considered it is permissible

for the Muslim consumption if the laboratory test cannot trace any swine's characteristics based on the principles of Istihalah namely in processing the medicine derived from non-halal materials. However, to prevent the application of Istihalah in wider scope, several principles of Islamic legal maxims have been used as argument to block any means of harmfulness".<sup>17</sup>

### Consequences

1. Food additives are substances added to food to maintain or improve its safety, freshness, taste, texture, or appearance.
2. Food additives need to be checked for potential harmful effects on human health before they can be used.
3. All the E-numbers containing products are not harm full in all conditions consumers must check the product formulation before using.
4. Some products also contain food additives which are not to be count in the E-numbers as mentioned above.
5. Islam support all those food additives and numbering methods and processes which do not contain or support any Haram (forbidden) items or ingredients and which are not harmful for the human beings directly or in-directly.

### Recommendations

1. As we know that the food is the basic need of every human being. So for that it is necessary to get and give the basic information and to the people about the good and bad products to get the good and avoid the bad.
2. Aware the people through print and electronic media as well.
3. Arrange curriculum and extra curriculum activities in school, collages, universities to aware the young generations to avoid the harmful and spicy fast foods that contains a

large amount of harmful food materials  
i.e. unhealthy food colors etc.

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