

## Food additives link to child tantrums

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PARENTS were advised by food safety experts yesterday to omit several additives from their children's diets, with new research set to confirm a link between the E numbers and behavioural problems.

A study for the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has analysed the effects of a number of preservatives and colourings found in sweets, drinks and processed foods commonly eaten by children.

It is thought to have concluded that there is a definite link between the additives and problems such as temper tantrums and hyperactivity.

Although the findings are not due to be released until later this year, the results of the Southampton University research have been viewed and considered by the FSA's committee on toxicity of chemicals in food.

It has now officially noted "the public health importance of the findings", which are thought to have been consistent with a similar study in 2000 that was disputed by the committee.

The first trial concluded that "significant changes in children's behaviour could be produced by the removal of colourings and additives from their diet and benefit would accrue for all children from such a change". However, the committee said in 2002 that the study had been inconclusive.

The FSA set up the further study to provide conclusive evidence, with a working group of independent experts, and they have advised consumers to consider removing these additives from children's diets immediately.

The colours, tested on three-year-olds and eight- to nine-year-olds, are tartrazine (E102), ponceau 4R (E124), sunset yellow (E110), carmoisine (E122), quinoline yellow (E104) and allura red AC (E129). The preservative sodium benzoate (E211) was also tested.