

IS EVERYTHING WE EAT HEALTHY?

Horse meat in lasagna, aflatoxin in milk... Is everything we eat healthy, especially when we speak about industrial food? Do we know what we eat? Can we believe in declarations on food articles? Do inspections do well their job in food control in order to protect the customers? We come to conclusion that food is full of chemicals that can cause different illnesses. The managers of food corporations, in their furious run for the profit are finding their way to the customer by experimenting with additives, aromas, cheapest raw materials available that are at the edge of hygienic validity. The customers should be protected because the whole system exists for their safety, and they are the ones that finance it. But their legal rights are still far from those that are in practice in countries of European Union.

There are food articles that have labels that are not true! That is why we visited the shelves of stores and started our investigation. Can we call a blueberry tea, the tea that has only 1% of blueberries? Can we say that we hold in our hands a chocolate bar if it contains only 5% of cacao? Or is it just a sugary bar? Can we call apple juice water with sugar that practically has no apples?

"Some customers ask us the same questions, although people rarely read the declaration on food articles, usually they look for the usage date. Some producers use the names "tea with the cranberry flavor", "yoghurt with the strawberry flavor", and in that way they stay away from the responsibility, says **Mira Radović**, the salesperson in the "Merkator" store, "and the customers are choosing the cheapest articles, that are in the same time of less quality"

How it is possible to have food products that have almost none of the element that is posted on the label, is that the deception of the customer?

- The Rulebooks clearly define how the food products are labeled. If it the product is labeled "plum jam", it should have large percent of plums. The labeling of something that is present only in traces is not allowed. When an article is labeled only as "flavored", it is another story – says **Snežana Drašković** from the sanitary inspection.

Answering our question what products and food producers Sanitary inspection control in Nikšić municipality, **Juliana Mijušković** says: "All that is edible and for human consumption, including the raw materials and finalized products. All food producers are included in the control, and we also control the food validity in the stores.

"Most additives could be found in prepared food, fast food, ice-creams and cooked food", conclude for the end **Drasković** and **Mijušković**.

„Having in mind that I have two small children, I try as much as I can, to prepare the food of organic origin, that is treated the least, and I avoid to buy frozen meet and meet products, as well as sweets where I lately noticed that producers now put chemical name of the emulgators, probably because customers are afraid of the "E and the number" labels, thinking that all emulgators are carcinogenic“, says **Ljubica Joković** (32).

Food sometimes only looks like food, because it is full of the preservatives and chemicals that kill bacteria. Most of the food products contain additives that give attractive color, smell and flavor, in order to attract us to buy them. Most people are not informed about what is contained in food and that it can cause even the worse illnesses.



The mass food production, on its way from the field or farm to our plates is exposed to the chemical mixtures of artificial fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, hormones and antibiotics. The plants are grown in the ground that is poor with mineral, the mass production leads to the land exhaustion, and in that way the food products such as vegetables become "empty" because they lack the minerals.

In the **Agricultural service** of the Nikšić municipality, they say the use of the chemical agents is necessary in intensive agricultural production. By the correct use of these agents no negative effect is caused to the plants or the environment. The producers of the chemical agents give all necessary instructions to reduce the influence on plants, water, and other organisms.

Those chemical agents are used on plants in specific period which prevent from the negative consequences. If we don't use these chemical agents in proper way, we don't only threaten the planted food but also the environmental. There are those substances that are used as stimulants for plant growth that speed up the process of growing and ripening of plants, says the representative of the Agriculture service.

We looked for the opinions of the expert, **nutritionist, the specialist of internal medicine, dr. Biljana Savić**, who answered to our question on how we should eat: "We should take care about where we buy food and how we buy it. We should read the declarations and use all possible sources to inform ourselves about the food products we should and should not use."

What food products are full of artificial processed food? - "There are numerous food products that contain preservatives, flavor enhancers, artificial colors, large amounts of salts and sugars, hydrogenated fats, and these all make food less healthy. Unfortunately, there is more "industrialized" food than the "organic". We often use terms healthy and less healthy food. For food producers, the economical part is more important than what consequences the consummation of the food they produce will cause. There is an acceptable daily allowed amount of additive that can be ingested, but only those that are listed in the positive list of the Rulebook. This amount can be ingested everyday throughout the whole life, without their negative influence on the health. The illnesses can occur if we, for a longer period, ingest larger amounts of the additive from the daily allowed limits. Therefore we should ask ourselves, how good is the food control, and do we receive right and true information about the food products", says for the end dr Savić.

We conclude, "**To eat something is not a strategy, to have a healthy meal is**" !

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