martindale dental

Toothpaste Ingredient Watchlist

Ingredients to Watch Out For

- X SLS - May irritate sensitive mouths or trigger canker sores
- X Triclosan - Linked to hormonal disruption, banned in some countries
- X Artificial colours/sweeteners - May cause allergic reactions
- X Harsh abrasives (charcoal, microbeads) - Can erode enamel
- X Parabens & PEGs - Preservatives with health/environmental concerns
- X Titanium dioxide - Controversial whitening agent, avoid if possible

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS)

This detergent creates the foam in your toothpaste, but it can also irritate sensitive tissues in your mouth. It's known to worsen canker sores and dry mouth symptoms. SLS-free options are ideal for people with recurring oral discomfort.

Triclosan

Once used to prevent bacterial buildup, Triclosan was banned from hand soaps and flagged by health authorities due to potential hormonal side effects and antimicrobial resistance. It's no longer common, but may still appear in older products.

Artificial Colours & Sweeteners

Colourants like Blue 1 and Red 40 serve no functional purpose and can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Artificial sweeteners like saccharin and aspartame are added for taste, but offer no benefit to dental health. Look for naturally sweetened alternatives using xylitol, which also helps prevent cavities.

Harsh Abrasives

Charcoal and baking soda are marketed as natural whiteners, but their abrasiveness can wear down enamel if used frequently. Microbeads (now banned in many countries) were previously used to scrub stains but

posed both oral health and environmental risks.

Parabens & PEGs

These chemical preservatives are used for extending shelf life and improving texture. However, some research raises concerns about endocrine disruption and poor environmental breakdown. Many clean-label brands now advertise 'paraben-free' and 'PEG-free' formulas.

Titanium Dioxide

This pigment is added purely for whitening toothpaste visually. While it's considered safe in topical applications, ingesting it regularly-especially in nanoparticle form-has sparked enough concern that it's now banned as a food additive in the EU. Choosing toothpaste without it is a cautious approach.