

Cheese Additives & Preservation — With Health Considerations

Many packaged and shredded cheeses contain additives to extend shelf life, prevent mould, and keep shreds from clumping. While permitted in Australia, some may have health concerns with long-term or high intake. This guide lists additive numbers, names, functions, uses, and possible health risks.

Number	Name	Function	Common Use in Cheese	Possible Health Concerns
200	Sorbic acid	Preservative (anti-mould)	Added to shredded, sliced, and processed cheese to inhibit mould growth	Generally recognised as safe, but may cause skin/eye irritation or allergic reactions in sensitive individuals
202	Potassium sorbate	Preservative (anti-mould)	Used to keep shredded cheese mould-free for months	Can cause skin irritation or digestive upset in sensitive people; some animal studies show DNA damage at high doses
203	Calcium sorbate	Preservative (anti-mould)	Similar to potassium sorbate; less common	Possible skin/respiratory irritation; limited human studies
235	Natamycin	Natural antifungal	Sprayed or dusted on shredded or sliced cheese to prevent mould	Considered safe in small amounts; may cause allergic reactions in rare cases
460	Cellulose	Anti-caking agent	Prevents cheese shreds from clumping; absorbs moisture	Generally safe; excessive intake may cause digestive discomfort
341	Calcium phosphate	Anti-caking agent	Prevents clumping and can slow microbial growth	Excessive intake linked to kidney stone risk in susceptible individuals
466	Carboxymethylcellulose (CMC)	Anti-caking / stabiliser	Keeps shredded cheese free-flowing	May cause bloating or digestive discomfort; high intakes in animals linked to gut inflammation
270	Lactic acid	Acidity regulator	Controls pH to slow spoilage and mould growth	Generally safe; excessive amounts may cause dental erosion or digestive upset