



It's important to realize that the natural chemicals in many 'healthy' foods can be just as much of a problem for sensitive people as the 'artificial' ones used as food additives. Foods vary tremendously in chemical composition. The natural substances most likely to upset sensitive individuals—salicylates, amines and glutamate—are the ones common to many different foods, and therefore consumed in greatest quantity in the daily diet. As a rule, the tastier a food is, the richer it's likely to be in natural chemicals. A comprehensive list of foods and their natural chemical content is shown in the charts on pages 16–21.

**food additives** People who are sensitive to natural food chemicals are usually also sensitive to one or more of the common food additives such as preservatives, artificial colours and flavourings. Reactions to these can be easier to recognise than reactions to natural chemicals because of the higher doses present in processed foods. As with the natural chemicals, individuals vary in their sensitivity to particular additives, and it's often worthwhile testing this out systematically rather than avoiding all additives. The ones most likely to be a problem in people with food intolerance are listed on page 244 along with their code numbers.

**food intolerance reactions** Symptoms triggered by food chemical intolerances vary from person to person. The commonest ones are recurrent hives and swellings, headaches, sinus trouble, mouth ulcers, nausea, stomach pains and bowel irritation. Some people feel vaguely unwell, with flu-like aches and pains, or get unusually tired, run-down or moody, often for no apparent reason. Children can become irritable and restless, and behavioural problems can be aggravated in those with nervous system disorders such as ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Even

**Dose dependence** Food intolerance reactions are dose dependent. A small amount of a chemical-rich food (e.g. one or two strawberries; a slice of fresh tomato) may cause no symptoms, whereas a larger amount that exceeds your dose threshold (e.g. a whole punnet of strawberries; tomato concentrated as a sauce or paste) can provoke a reaction. Eating small amounts regularly can cause a gradual build-up with symptoms developing after a few days.

