



ELITE

Personal Training and Fitness Solutions

# HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

5/31 : Carrageenan

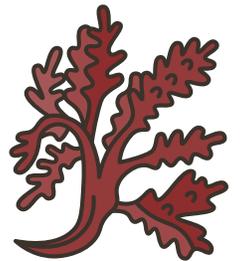
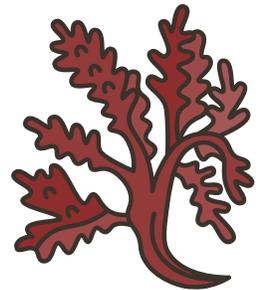
## Should You Remove Carrageenan from Your Diet?

### What is Carrageenan?

Carrageenan is an additive used to thicken, emulsify, and preserve foods and drinks. It's a natural ingredient that comes from red seaweed (also called Irish moss). You'll often find this ingredient in nut milks, meat products, and yogurt.

Since the late 1960s, controversy has surrounded the health effects of carrageenan. Evidence suggests that carrageenan can trigger inflammation, cause gastrointestinal ulcerations, and damage the digestive system.

Consumers have petitioned for products with carrageenan to be labeled with a warning or removed entirely. Read on to learn more about this common food additive and why you may want to avoid it.



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at [Eliteptf.com](http://Eliteptf.com) for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

## Dangers and side effects of carrageenan

Legally, products with carrageenan may be labeled as “natural,” but limited studies show that carrageenan may promote:

- inflammation
- bloating
- irritable bowel syndrome
- glucose intolerance
- colon cancer
- food allergies

Increased inflammation can lead to a greater likelihood of other diseases, such as:

- inflammatory bowel disease
- arthritis
- tendonitis
- chronic cholecystitis (gallbladder inflammation)

Carrageenan comes in two versions: ungraded (approved as food-grade) and degraded (not approved for human consumption). There’s a growing belief that the difference between the two is not substantial – which is alarming!

Degraded carrageenan is a carcinogen. Degraded carrageenan is used to induce inflammation in animal studies. Test results of food-grade carrageenan carried at least 5 percent degraded carrageenan. One sample had about 25 percent. That certainly causes concern.

Those who feel that carrageenan is a health-related issue point out that the research consisted of animal studies and that the reports of digestive issues were self-reported. This is a rather weak counterargument. The reality is that most research is performed on animals, and of course, digestive complaints are by nature highly subjective.



### Is carrageenan safe?

There is no definitive answer regarding the safe consumption of carrageenan. Digestive issues often result. However, many people find relief after eliminating carrageenan from their diet. The greatest threat to us is that carrageenan is potentially carcinogenic. Why take the risk? It’s not worth it.

For the reasons stated, it would be wise to avoid carrageenan or at least limit how much you consume. Carrageenan has no nutritional value. Therefore, you don’t need to worry about missing anything important if you remove it from your diet.

## Which foods have carrageenan?

Carrageenan tends to be used in vegan and vegetarian products. Since carrageenan is a plant, manufacturers use it to replace gelatin, which is made from animal parts.

### Common sources of carrageenan

- chocolate milk
- cottage cheese
- cream
- ice cream
- almond milk
- dairy alternatives, such as vegan cheeses or nondairy desserts
- coconut milk
- creamers
- hemp milk
- rice milk
- soy milk
- deli meats



### The bottom line

Concerned about the side effects of carrageenan? Take it out of your diet and then take note of how you're feeling. Carrageenan is legally required to be listed as an ingredient, so it should be easy to identify foods that contain it.

In addition to outstanding exercise expertise, all Elite staff has a strong background in nutrition. The following staff also hold post-graduate certifications:

Amy Kha      Pn1-Exercise Nutrition  
Zack Younis    NASM-Certified Nutrition Coach  
Tunde Oladipo    ISSA-Certified Nutritionist

Questions? We'd love to help!