

ACTIVATED CHARCOAL IN FOODS

According to the National Capital Poison Center (Poison Control), Activated charcoal (also known as Vegetable ash, vegetable carbon, vegetable black, activated carbon) is created from carbon-rich materials such as wood, coconut shells or coal, and burned at high temperatures, to create a charcoal powder. The high temperatures make it more porous, increasing its power to bind to other substances.

Health professionals administer activated charcoal to patients who have overdosed with certain drugs or have been poisoned.

Activated charcoal is also commonly found in water filtration systems, respiratory masks and air filters. The activated charcoal attracts and binds to contaminants in water and air including radon, fuels, solvents and many industrial and radioactive chemicals, and protects us against breathing or ingesting them, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Activated charcoal has also been used historically in cheese and wine making.

Activated charcoal is a manufactured product, not found naturally in foods.

Activated charcoal is not an approved color additive.

There is no listing for activated charcoal in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Code of Federal Regulations Title 21 (21 CFR).

Foods containing activated charcoal as an unapproved color additive may be deemed adulterated; unsafe substance in food (21 CFR, section 402(c)).

The intended use of activated charcoal determines its regulatory status. If you are using or plan to use activated charcoal in foods, please contact the City of Albuquerque's Environmental Health Department, Consumer Health Protection Department at 505-768-2738 for regulatory guidance.