



**NATIONAL STANDARD OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

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National food safety standard - Limits of contaminants in food

食品安全国家标准 食品中污染物限量

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1 Scope

The document fixes the limit indices for lead, cadmium, mercury, arsenic, tin, nickel, chromium, nitrite, nitrate, benzo[a]pyrene, N-nitrosodimethylamine, polychlorinated biphenyls and 3-chloro-1,2-propanediol in food.

2 Terms and definitions

2.1 Contaminant: a chemically hazardous substance, not added on purpose, that arises during production including crop growing, animal rearing and veterinary medication, processing, packaging, storage, transport and sale, up to consumption, or that is brought in by environmental pollution. In the document contaminants exclude pesticide residues, veterinary drug residues, biotoxins and radioactive substances.

2.2 Edible part: the part left for eating after the inedible part has been removed from the raw material by mechanical means such as milling grain, peeling fruit, shelling nuts, boning meat, deboning fish and shucking shellfish.

2.3 Limit: the maximum content level of a contaminant allowed in the edible part of a food raw material or a finished food.

3 Principles of application

3.1 Whether or not a limit has been set for a contaminant, food producers and processors take control measures to bring its content in food down to the lowest level.

3.2 The document lists the contaminants that may pose the greater risk to public health, and the foods for which limits are set are those with the greater effect on consumer dietary exposure.

3.3 The description of the food categories and names in Annex A delimits the scope over which a limit applies and holds for the document alone. Where a limit applies to a food category or name, it applies to every food inside that category unless a special provision says otherwise.

3.4 Limits are calculated on the part of the food usually eaten, unless a special provision says otherwise.

3.5 For dried aquatic products and dried edible fungi, where limits exist both for the fresh food and for the corresponding product, the limit for the dried product is worked back from the limit for the fresh food through the dehydration or concentration ratio. Where the content in the dried product is below the limit for its fresh raw material, it may be judged compliant. The dehydration or concentration ratio may be established by analysis of the food, by information supplied by the producer or by other available data. Special provisions prevail.

4 Index requirements

The clause is built as twelve pairs of subclauses, one per contaminant: a table of limits and a sentence naming the method standard for verification.

4.1 Lead. Table 1 sets limits as Pb in mg/kg, and in mg/L for packaged drinking water, across cereals and their products, vegetables and their products, fruit and its products, edible fungi and their products, pulses and their products, algae and their products, nuts and seeds, meat and meat products, aquatic animals and their products, milk and dairy products, eggs and egg products, fats and oils and their products, condiments, sugar and starch sugar, starch and starch products, baked foods, beverages, alcoholic drinks, cocoa and chocolate products and confectionery, frozen drinks, foods for special dietary uses, and a residual class holding jelly, puffed food, tea, dried chrysanthemum, kuding tea, honey and pollen. Named sub-categories are carved out of most classes; for example edible fungi are split between a general entry, a group headed by button mushroom, oyster mushroom, shiitake and honey mushroom, a group headed by bolete, matsutake, truffle, green russula, termite mushroom, chanterelle and weeping milk cap, and a separate entry for wood ear and white fungus expressed on a dry weight basis. Three footnotes apply: paddy rice is

counted as brown rice; fresh spices such as ginger, spring onion and garlic follow the corresponding fresh vegetable or fresh fruit category; and liquid infant formula converts its limit at a ratio of eight to one. Verification is by GB 8538 for packaged drinking water and by GB 5009.12 for other foods.

4.2 Cadmium. Table 2 sets limits as Cd in mg/kg, and in mg/L for packaged drinking water and natural mineral water, across cereals and their products with paddy rice, brown rice and milled rice carved out, vegetables and their products, fresh fruit, edible fungi and their products with several named groups, pulses, groundnut under nuts and seeds, meat and meat products with liver and kidney carved out, aquatic animals and their products with sea crab and mantis shrimp carved out and bivalves, gastropods, cephalopods and echinoderms measured with the viscera removed, aquatic products, eggs and egg products, condiments limited to table salt and fish condiments, beverages limited to packaged drinking water and natural mineral water, and infant cereal supplementary food. Verification is by GB 8538 for packaged drinking water and by GB 5009.15 for other foods.

4.3 Mercury. Table 3 carries two limit columns, total mercury and methylmercury, a dash meaning no limit is set in that column. The categories covered are aquatic animals and their products with carnivorous fish and then tuna, albacore, marlin and shark carved out one by one, cereals and their products, fresh vegetables, edible fungi and their products, meat, milk, fresh eggs, table salt, natural mineral water and canned infant supplementary food. Two footnotes apply: for foods with a methylmercury limit, total mercury may be measured first and the food judged compliant without measuring methylmercury where total mercury does not exceed the methylmercury limit, failing which methylmercury is measured; and paddy rice is counted as brown rice. Verification is by GB 8538 for natural mineral water and by GB 5009.17 for other foods.

4.4 Arsenic. Table 4 likewise carries two limit columns, total arsenic and inorganic arsenic, with a dash where no limit applies. Cereals split so that paddy rice, brown rice and milled rice carry an inorganic arsenic limit while other cereals and milled products carry a total arsenic limit. Further entries cover aquatic animals and their products with fish carved out, fresh vegetables, edible fungi with matsutake, wood ear and white fungus carved out, meat and meat products, milk and dairy products including milk powder, fats and oils with fish oil and krill oil carved out, condiments with aquatic and compound condiments carved out, sugar and starch sugar, packaged drinking water, cocoa and chocolate products, and foods for special dietary uses covering infant cereal and canned supplementary foods, supplementary nutrient supplements, sports nutrition food in solid and liquid form and nutrient supplements for pregnant and lactating women. The same two footnotes on measuring the total first and on paddy rice apply. Verification is by GB 8538 for packaged drinking water and by GB 5009.11 for other foods.

4.5 Tin. Table 5 sets limits as Sn in mg/kg for foods in general, for beverages and for infant formula and infant supplementary food, and applies only to food packed in tinplate

containers. Verification is by GB 5009.16.

4.6 Nickel. Table 6 sets a limit as Ni in mg/kg for hydrogenated vegetable oil and for oil products containing hydrogenated or partly hydrogenated fats. Verification is by GB 5009.138.

4.7 Chromium. Table 7 sets limits as Cr in mg/kg for cereals and milled cereal products, fresh vegetables, pulses, meat and meat products, aquatic animals and their products, and milk and dairy products. Paddy rice is counted as brown rice. In the extraction the dairy row runs the two category names and the two values together, so the pairing of the liquid milk entry and the milk powder entry with their values is not carried across here. Verification is by GB 5009.123.

4.8 Nitrite and nitrate. Table 8 carries two limit columns, nitrite as sodium nitrite and nitrate as sodium nitrate, in mg/kg, with the beverage entries in mg/L and expressed as the nitrite and nitrate ions. Entries cover pickled vegetables, raw milk, milk powder and formulated milk powder, packaged drinking water other than natural mineral water, natural mineral water, foods for special dietary uses covering infant, follow-up and young child formula, formula for special medical purposes for infants, infant cereal and canned supplementary foods, formula food for special medical purposes other than the infant products, supplementary nutrient supplements and nutrient supplements for pregnant and lactating women, and edible bird's nest in the residual class. Five footnotes apply: liquid infant formula converts at a ratio of eight to one; some entries hold only for milk-based products; some do not apply to products with added vegetables or fruit; some do not apply to products with added pulses; and one holds only for milk-based products free of pulse ingredients. Verification is by GB 8538 for beverages and by GB 5009.33 for other foods.

4.9 Benzo[a]pyrene. Table 9 sets limits in micrograms per kilogram for paddy rice, brown rice, milled rice, wheat, wheat flour, maize, maize flour and maize grits; for smoked, roasted and barbecued meat; for smoked and roasted aquatic products; for cream, butter and anhydrous butter; and for fats and oils and their products. Paddy rice is counted as brown rice. Verification is by GB 5009.27.

4.10 N-nitrosodimethylamine. Table 10 sets limits in micrograms per kilogram for meat products other than canned meat, for aquatic products other than canned aquatic products, and for dried aquatic products. Verification is by GB 5009.26.

4.11 Polychlorinated biphenyls. Table 11 sets limits in micrograms per kilogram for aquatic animals and their products and for aquatic animal oils. The footnote states that polychlorinated biphenyls are counted as the sum of PCB28, PCB52, PCB101, PCB118, PCB138, PCB153 and PCB180. Verification is by GB 5009.190.

4.12 3-chloro-1,2-propanediol. Table 12 sets limits in mg/kg for condiments other than solid condiments and for solid condiments, and applies only to products containing acid hydrolysed vegetable protein. Verification is by GB 5009.191.