

Addendum to the BCA Technical & Regulatory Minutes – 9th June 2020

EFSA updated opinion. Nickel and Coffee. For information and action.

EFSA's Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain (CONTAM) has launched an [open consultation](#) on the draft scientific opinion on the [update of the risk assessment](#) of nickel in food and drinking water. This document presents an estimation of the acute and chronic human dietary exposure to nickel from food and drinking water, and an assessment of the human health risks related to this dietary exposure.

This new scientific opinion is an update of the [2015 EFSA opinion](#) in which **coffee beverages were considered as the overall main contributor in the food group 'non-alcoholic beverages' in the adult population.**

As a result of the 2015 Opinion the EU published a [Recommendation \(EU\) 2016/1111](#) on the monitoring of nickel in food. The Recommendation requested **Member States, with the active involvement of food business operators and other interested parties, to perform monitoring of the presence of nickel in food during 2016, 2017 and 2018.** The monitoring focused on different food categories including **non-alcoholic beverages.**

To be noted that there is currently NO EU Regulation regarding maximum levels for nickel in food.

In the revised opinion that has taken into account the data compiled during the past three years, coffee beverages are again considered as main contributors in the 'non-alcoholic beverages' category. The food category 'non alcoholic beverages' gave the second highest contribution except for young age groups, with a contribution reaching up to 47% in very elderly. For adult age groups, **coffee beverages were the main contributor.** For the 95th percentile UB (upper bound) acute dietary exposure varied between age classes and surveys. Beans, **coffee**, ready-to-eat soups, chocolate and breakfast cereals were the **most relevant food categories in most of the surveys.**

However, when addressing the general risk characterisation, **EFSA concludes that the mean LB (lower bound) and UB chronic dietary exposure was below the TDI** (Tolerable Daily Intake) and thus, **does not indicate a concern.** It specifically says that the 95th percentile LB chronic dietary exposure was below the TDI in all adult age groups. Thus, the **95th percentile chronic dietary exposure** to nickel may raise a health concern for infants, toddler or young children, **not for adults.**

It is important to note that occurrence and consumption events for solid forms of certain foods such as coffee beans or coffee imitates were adjusted by an appropriate dilution factor and these consumption events were reclassified to the liquid forms as this was considered more appropriate for the current assessment. As you may observe for coffee, the difference of values in the solid form and beverage is significant. Thus, the reclassification is of great importance to us.

Hereunder you may find the data that was referred to for coffee.

2015 EFSA OPINION

Occurrence values (µg/kg) used for chronic and acute exposure to nickel through food consumption

Food commodities	N	%LC	Mean		95th percentile	
			LB	UB	LB	UB
Tea (infusion)	238	0	7,6	7,6	42	42
Cocoa beans and cocoa products (solid)			9.500	9.500	12.000	12.000
Cocoa beverage			160	160	210	210
Coffee beans and coffee products (solid)	83	2	1.200	1.200	3.100	3.100
Coffee beverage			68	68	170	170

2020 updated EFSA OPINION

Occurrence values (µg/kg) used for chronic and acute exposure to nickel through food consumption

Food category FoodEx level 2	Number of analytical results	% LCD	Mean LB	Mean UB	P95 LB	P95 UB
Tea and herbs for infusions (Solid)	182	1	4167	4168	8450	8450
Cocoa beans and cocoa products	259	0	9048	9051	12465	12465
Coffee beans and coffee products (Solid)	200	27	783	797	2800	2800
Coffee imitates (Solid)	2	50	1245	1295	2490	2490
Tea (Infusion)	26	19	60	71	207	207
Coffee (Beverage)	14	0	16	16	57	57

As you may observe the values for coffee have decreased.

The **EFSA open consultation runs until 15 July 2020**. Nevertheless, **if you have any analytical results for nickel in roasted or soluble coffee** (solid form or beverage) the ECF would very much appreciate you sharing this data with them. Unfortunately, EFSA cannot use additional occurrence data submitted during the public consultation for the dietary exposure assessment in the risk assessment. However, it might provide the ECF with additional information.