

Arsenic in rice

Arsenic is a substance that is naturally present in the environment. This means it gets into food and water in varying amounts in different regions of the world.

It's impossible to eliminate arsenic from food. Having too much arsenic in our diet could be harmful to our health.

Keeping rice safe

Rice tends to take up more arsenic from the environment than other cereal crops, depending on the variety of rice and how it's grown. The arsenic in rice also tends to be a more toxic form. It has the potential to increase the risk of illnesses in humans, including cancer. This does not mean you should not eat rice. You can enjoy rice as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

There are maximum levels set in [legislation on the levels of inorganic arsenic allowed in rice and rice products](#) in the EU. Stricter levels are set for foods intended for young children.

The maximum levels for substances that contaminate our environment are regularly reviewed. Manufacturers are responsible for making sure the food they produce is safe and as low in arsenic as reasonably achievable.

Young children and rice milk

Rice is often used to make a drink that can be used as a substitute for milk. To help reduce their exposure, young children aged under five years should not be given rice milk as a substitute for:

- breast milk
- infant formula
- cows' milk

This is because, compared to other consumers, they tend to drink more milk and have a lower body weight.

There are a number of alternatives to suit young children with an allergy or intolerance to cows' milk or soya. Talk to a health professional such as a doctor or dietitian to find a suitable milk alternative.

Children over five years old and adults can drink rice milk as part of their balanced diet.