

Food Standards Agency sets deadline for the CBD industry and provides safety advice to consumers

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is giving the [CBD](#) industry a deadline of 31 March 2021 to submit valid novel food authorisation applications. After 31 March next year, only products which have submitted a valid application will be allowed to remain on the market. The authorisation process ensures novel foods meet legal standards, including on safety and content.

Local authorities enforce the novel food legislation. They have been advised that businesses should be able to sell their existing CBD products during this time provided they are not incorrectly labelled, are not unsafe to eat and do not contain substances that fall under drugs legislation.

In addition, the FSA is today advising those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or taking any medication not to consume CBD products. Healthy adults are also advised to think carefully before taking CBD, and the FSA recommends no more than 70mg a day (about 28 drops of 5% CBD) unless under medical direction. This new precautionary advice is based on recent findings by the government's Committee on Toxicity (COT).

Emily Miles, Chief Executive of the Food Standards Agency, said:

'CBD products are widely available on the high street but are not properly authorised. The CBD industry must provide more information about the safety and contents of these products to the regulator before 31 March 2021, or the products will be taken off the shelves.

'Also today, we are advising that CBD could be risky for vulnerable groups, and suggesting an upper limit of 70mg a day for everyone else taking the product.

'The actions that we're taking today are a pragmatic and proportionate step in balancing the protection of public health with consumer choice. It's now up to industry to supply this information so that the public can be reassured that CBD is safe and what it says it is.'

Professor Alan Boobis, Chair of the Committee on Toxicity, said:

'My committee has reviewed the evidence on CBD food products and found evidence there are potential adverse health effects from the consumption of these products. We are particularly concerned about pregnant or breast-feeding women and people on medication.

'We don't know enough to be sure about such a risk but I am pleased with the sensible and pragmatic approach the FSA is taking. The committee will continue to keep these products under review in the months ahead.'

What is CBD?

- [CBD](#) is a chemical found naturally within the cannabis plant, it has only very recently been removed and sold as a separate CBD extract. CBD extracts can be found in a range of products such as oils, confectionery, bakery products and drinks.
- CBD was confirmed as a novel food product in January 2019. Under the novel food regulations, foods or food ingredients which do not have a history of consumption before May 1997 should be evaluated and authorised before they can be placed on the market. More information about novel foods is available on [our website](#).
- Today's announcement by the FSA on CBD extracts applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Novel food regulations in Scotland are covered by Food Standards Scotland.
- The FSA is responsible for regulating CBD as a novel food. This does not include cosmetics, vapes, products making medicinal claims or products containing controlled drugs such as THC. Where CBD extracts also contain THC (or other controlled cannabinoids) then they will likely fall under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, and further guidance is available from the Home Office, which has provided a [factsheet](#) on Cannabis, CBD and other cannabinoids.
- There will be no impact from this announcement on those who take medically prescribed CBD or cannabis.

Enforcement

- The FSA is the Central Competent Authority (CCA) for food safety, however local authorities are responsible for the day to day enforcement of food law. The FSA issues guidance to support consistency in approach, but ultimately it is for local authorities to make specific enforcement decisions based on the facts of individual cases and circumstances.

Committee on Toxicity

- The Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT) is an independent scientific committee that provides advice to the FSA, the Department of Health and Health Care and other Government Departments and Agencies on matters concerning the toxicity of chemicals.