

Pyrrolizidine alkaloids in tea, herbal infusions and food supplements

Exposure to pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food, in particular for frequent and high consumers of tea and herbal infusions, is a possible long-term concern for human health due to their potential carcinogenicity, say EFSA's experts.

The consumption of food supplements based on pyrrolizidine alkaloid-producing plants could also result in exposure levels causing short-term toxicity resulting in adverse health effects.

EFSA has updated its [2011 advice on the risks for human and animal health from pyrrolizidine alkaloids](#), a large group of toxins produced by different plant species that can unintentionally enter the food chain.

The European Commission requested the updated risk assessment, which takes account of exposure estimates using more recent data on the levels of these toxins in honey, tea, herbal infusions and food supplements.

In 2011 EFSA concluded there were possible long-term health concerns for toddlers and children who are high consumers of honey, the only food category for which sufficient data were then available.

EFSA's experts identified 17 pyrrolizidine alkaloids in food and feed that should continue to be monitored and recommended further studies on the toxicity and carcinogenicity of those most commonly found in food.