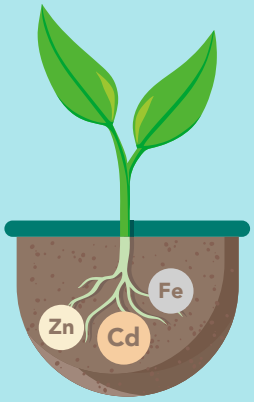
Western Growers® Science

Cadmium & Fresh Produce



You do not need to be afraid of fresh fruits and vegetables because they may contain small amounts of naturally occurring cadmium. A varied diet that includes fruits and vegetables remains important for babies and young children.

What is Cadmium?



Cadmium is a metal that occurs naturally in soil.

Plants take up nutrients from soil through their roots. They can also take up very small amounts of cadmium.

Some crops, including spinach and carrots, can take up more cadmium than some other crops.

Finding a small amount of cadmium in food does not, by itself, mean the food is unsafe.

What should parents know?

The goal is not to make every food contain zero cadmium. Under normal growing conditions, that is not possible.

- The goal is to keep exposure as low as reasonably possible while making sure children still get the nutrition they need.



- Cadmium exposure is generally a concern because of exposure over time, not because of one serving of food.
- A scientific study estimates long-term cadmium exposure from spinach alone was below the lower end of the FDA's toxicological reference value range for both the general U.S. population and children ages 0–6, and did not independently present a public health concern.

Fresh fruits and vegetables still matter

VITAMINS & MINERALS

FIBER

OTHER NUTRIENTS

- Fruits and vegetables provide important vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients.
- Cutting out fruits or vegetables because of fear about cadmium can mean missing those benefits.
- A varied diet is one of the best ways to support good nutrition while also avoiding too much exposure to any one substance.
- There are many fruits and vegetables that do not have detectable levels of some heavy metals, and most crops are not sources of significant exposure.

If you make your baby's food at home



1. Keep offering a variety of fruits and vegetables.
2. Rotate the foods you use rather than serving the same food every day.
3. Spinach and carrots can be part of a varied diet
4. Use a mix of fruits, vegetables and other age-appropriate foods so your baby gets a range of nutrients.
5. Do not let fear of cadmium push healthy foods out of your baby's diet.

What about the FDA's 'Closer to Zero' work?

The FDA is working to reduce children's exposure to heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, mercury and cadmium.

An FDA action level is a regulatory tool. It is not the same thing as saying that every food with a detectable amount of a substance is dangerous.

The goal is to reduce exposure while protecting children's access to nutritious foods.

Simple answers to common parent questions



"I heard spinach or carrots can contain cadmium. Should I stop feeding them to my baby?"
No. Eat a varied diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

"If cadmium is found in food, does that mean the food is unsafe?"
No. Cadmium occurs naturally in soil and can be taken up by plants. Its presence by itself does not mean a food is unsafe.

"Can I make baby food with zero cadmium?"
You cannot control every naturally occurring substance in soil and plants. Zero exposure is not generally achievable. The practical goal is to keep exposure low while giving children nutritious foods.

"What can I do as a parent?"
Offer a variety of foods. Rotate fruits and vegetables, and do not rely on one food as the main source of produce every day.

"Should I worry about one meal?"
Cadmium risk is mainly in terms of cumulative exposure over many years. A single serving should not be treated as proof that a food is unsafe.

One-minute version for a mom-to-mom conversation

Cadmium can sound scary, especially when you are making food for your baby. But cadmium is a naturally occurring metal found in soil, and plants can take up very small amounts as they grow. Finding cadmium in a food does not automatically mean that food is unsafe.

The important thing is to keep exposure low over time while making sure babies and young children get the nutrients they need. That is why a varied diet is so important. Keep offering a mix of fruits and vegetables rather than cutting healthy foods out of your baby's diet because of fear.



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