



Food
Standards
Agency
food.gov.uk

Food Standards Agency (FSA) update on Cannabidiol (CBD) products

3 November 2025

Agenda

Introduction to the FSA and CBD

The safety of CBD novel foods

Consumer research

Legislative outline

Questions

The Food Standards Agency



We are an independent government department working to protect public health and consumers' wider interests in relation to food.

Our fundamental mission is food you can trust.



Our work is underpinned by the latest science and evidence and agreed at our open Board meetings.



We work across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We collaborate with Food Standards Scotland (FSS).

What are CBD foods?



- CBD stands for **cannabidiol**, one of the many chemical compounds found within the **hemp or cannabis** plant
- CBD can also be produced **synthetically**
- CBD food products can come as either:
 - **foods with CBD added** (such as chocolate or drinks)
 - **food supplements** (such as capsules, oils, gummies and sprays)

CBD foods are not CBPMs

CBD safety



Image Source: [Llyods Pharmacy](#)

- Refined from *Cannabis sativa* or produced synthetically
- Range of uses across many food categories
- Distinct groupings based on composition
 - Group A ($\geq 98\%$ CBD)
 - Group B ($\geq 80\%$ to $<98\%$ CBD)
 - Group C ($< 80\%$ CBD)
- Supporting work on CBD safety
 - Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for CBD
 - Safe Upper Limit for $\Delta 9$ -THC

Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for CBD

- **Provisional ADI for CBD established at 10 mg/day CBD**
- Basis for the ADI:
 - Literature review and confidential toxicity data
 - Values derived from most sensitive effects
 - Liver
 - Thyroid
 - Safety factors (total SF = 300)



Image Source: [Adobe Stock](#)

Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) for CBD (continued)

- Uncertainties/data gaps?
 - Bioavailability
 - Chronic use
 - Immunotoxicity
 - Vulnerable groups
 - Drug interactions
- How the work on CBD safety is being applied
 - **ADI of 10 mg/day CBD**



Image Source: [Pharmaceutical Press](#)

Introduction to Δ 9-THC

- What is Δ 9-tetrahydrocannabinol?
 - Also produced by *Cannabis sativa*
 - Δ 9-THC and
 - Δ 9-THCA (acid precursor)
 - Widely known around the world
 - Recreational use
 - Therapeutic agent
- Why is it a concern for CBD novel foods?
 - Controlled substance
 - Unavoidable contaminant
 - Adverse effects from consumption as a contaminant
 - Psychoactive effects
 - No previous Safe Upper Limit for THC as a contaminant

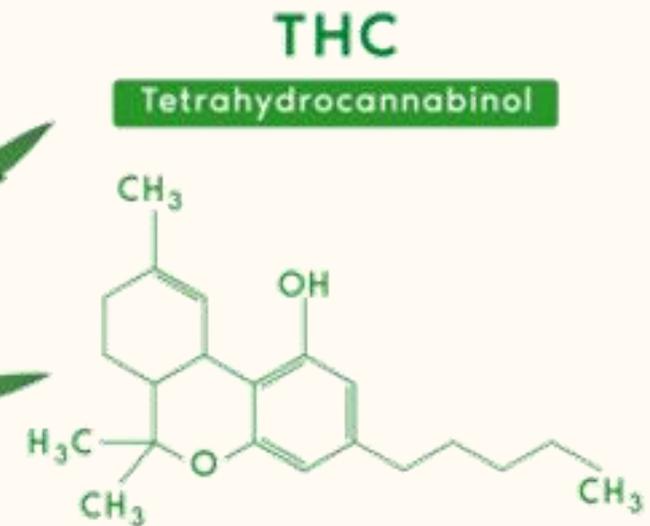


Image Source: [La Hacienda](#)

Safe Upper Limit for $\Delta 9$ -THC

- The basis for the limit
 - Public literature, clinical trial data, previous reviews:
 - [Scientific Opinion on the risks for human health related to the presence of tetrahydrocannabinol \(THC\) in milk and other food of animal origin](#)
 - [ACMD advice on consumer cannabidiol \(CBD\) products](#)
- Findings
 - LOAEL = 0.036 mg/kg bw/day
 - Low dose 2.5 mg/day THC
 - Safety factor – 30x
 - **Sensitive effects:**
 - **Tachycardia**
 - **Altered cognitive function**



Image Source: [American Heart Association](#)



- **Safe Upper Limit established at 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ bw/day**
 - **0.07 mg/day THC for a 70 kg adult**

Safe Upper Limit for Δ^9 -THC (continued)

- Uncertainties and data gaps
 - Participants
 - Vulnerable groups
 - Data source and relevance
 - Other gaps surrounding toxicity
- The impact of the limit for CBD novel foods
 - Can be applied in risk assessments
 - Critical for ensuring consumer safety

Joint position paper from the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) & Committee on Toxicity (COT) on establishing a Safe Upper Limit for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9 -THC) and its precursor as contaminants of hemp-derived products including CBD novel foods.

Executive summary

1. A joint Subgroup of the ACNFP and COT was formed to address a series of over-arching questions in relation to the safety of hemp-derived ingredients and cannabidiol (CBD). The primary aim of the Subgroup is to enable the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to perform risk assessments for CBD and other minor cannabinoids in food. One such minor cannabinoid found within hemp-derived ingredients and CBD novel food products, as an incidental contaminant, is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which exists naturally in hemp (*Cannabis sativa* Linnaeus) as various isomers. Concerns have been raised specifically around delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (Δ^9 -THC) in foods due to its physiological and psychoactive effects, observed after consumption at quite low doses. THC is a controlled

CBD consumer guidance

- We recommend that healthy adults should limit their consumption of CBD from food to **10 mg per day** - the provisional ADI
- We advise that
 - **under-18s,**
 - **people taking medication,**
 - **and people breastfeeding, pregnant or trying to conceive**do not consume CBD

Consumer survey 2025

The FSA's Regular Consumer Insights Tracker suggests up to **12%** of adults have used/consumed CBD in the past 6 months.

We commissioned an additional survey of adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who have had CBD products in the last 12 months:

User Demographics

- CBD usage is highest among younger adults aged 18–34.

Usage Motivations

- Users primarily consume CBD for wellbeing, mental health support, sleep aid and pain relief.
- This raises the importance of screening for interactions with medications and offering evidence-based guidance.

Consumer survey 2025

Reliance

- Many indicated they would seek alternatives if CBD products were removed.

Pharmacies as Trusted Retailers

- Pharmacies are significant CBD purchase points (over 1 in 3 users buy CBD from pharmacies).

Consumer Regulatory Awareness

- Majority of consumers were unaware of the FSA's advised limit of 10 mg CBD/day, highlighting the need for clearer safety and usage information.

Legal framework



Wider food law ([General Food Law](#), [Food Information Regulations](#))



Nutrition and Health Claims Regulations & Human Medicines Regulations



[Novel Food Regulations](#)



[Food Supplements Regulations](#)



Misuse of Drugs Act (MDA) & Misuse of Drugs Regulations (MDR)

Health and medicinal claims

- DHSC issues [guidance](#) on nutrition and health claims made on foods. In Wales, Welsh government issues its own [guidance](#)
- There are currently no approved health claims for CBD on the Great Britain Nutrition and Health Claims Register
- MHRA issues [guidance](#) on medicinal claims for CBD products
- CBD products would be defined as medicines, not foods, if they are presented to:
 - Treat or prevent disease, or
 - Restore, correct, or modify physiological functions by exerting a pharmacological, immunological, or metabolic action

Therefore, CBD food products cannot legally make any health or medicinal claims

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has policy responsibility for misleading or unsubstantiated health claims in marketing

MHRA has responsibility for unauthorised products marketed for medical purposes

Novel food regulation

CBD foods are novel foods. This means they do not have a history of consumption

Novel foods must receive authorisation to have legal status

The FSA is working towards recommending the first CBD novel foods for authorisation

The FSA is asking the public for their views on these first three CBD applications

The CBD Public List

A list of CBD products that are associated with progressing novel food applications

Created to enable CBD products to stay on the market in England and Wales

We encourage businesses on the list to move towards meeting our safety standards

Any unauthorised products which are not on the list, or are marked as 'Removed', must be withdrawn from the market

Food Standards Agency

BETA This is a new service – your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it

Register of CBD products linked to novel food applications

[Home](#) / CBD products linked to novel food applications [See the \[guidance notes\]\(#\) for this register](#)

CBD products linked to novel food applications

Last updated: 14 November 2024

Search See Filters ▾

Download as: [CSV](#) [MS Excel](#)

Showing 1-10 of 12115 results Sort by **Last updated** ▾

1 2 ... [Next](#) [Last](#) Select to collapse view Rows per page **10** ▾

Product name	cbdid
Manufacturer or supplier:	Last updated: 14 November 2024
Status: Validated	
Application no: RPxxx	

What does this mean for pharmacies?

- Unauthorised products that are **not on the Public List should be removed from the market** in England and Wales
- We will update the details on the list if CBD products change for safety reasons
- Products may not yet align with our current guidance on CBD novel foods
- Consumers should always follow FSA guidance

Drugs law

- Home Office responsibility – see their [factsheet](#)
- Under the Misuse of Drugs Act, cannabis, THC and cannabinol derivatives are Class B [controlled drugs](#)
- Limits to CBD extraction mean that products will generally contain trace levels of other cannabinoids, including THC
- CBD food products with trace THC are controlled drugs



Drugs law

- The Misuse of Drugs Regulations sets out an “**exempt product**” definition which makes a product exempt from drugs prohibitions. In short:
 - a) The product is not designed for administration of the controlled drug
 - b) The controlled drug cannot be easily recovered
 - c) The product container does not contain more than 1 mg of the controlled drug
- A [Home Office License](#) is required if you deal with bulk CBD products that do not meet the “exempt product” definition. Not required if you sell finished CBD products that are exempt

Summary

- ✓ CBD food products are **regulated by the FSA** in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the **FSS** in Scotland
- ✓ Products on the **CBD Public List are recommended for tolerance** – others must be withdrawn in England and Wales
- ✓ Ensure CBD food products contain less than **1 mg of controlled drug**
- ✓ You can support informed choices:
 - CBD food products are not medicines and lack any approved **health claims**
 - Advise customers to not exceed **10 mg CBD per day**
 - Recommend avoiding CBD to under-18s, pregnant/breastfeeding individuals, and those on medication

Useful links

- Please share your views on the potential authorisation of the first CBD food products through our public consultation (closes 20 November 2025): [Consultation on applications for authorisation of 3 Cannabidiol \(CBD\) food products as novel foods August 2025 | Food Standards Agency](#)
- FSA CBD Business guidance webpage: [Cannabidiol \(CBD\) guidance for England and Wales | Food Standards Agency](#)
- The CBD Public List (England and Wales): [Register of CBD products linked to novel food applications](#)
- Science committee papers on CBD and THC: [Statements | Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes](#)
- Food Standards Scotland: [Cannabidiol business guidance | Food Standards Scotland](#)

Contact the CBD Team: cbdpubliclist@food.gov.uk