



2026/2329

23.10.2026

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION (EU) 2026/2329
of 21 October 2026
on monitoring the presence of N-nitrosamines in food

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 292 thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The European Food Safety Authority ('Authority') adopted an opinion in 2023 on the risks for human health related to the presence of N-nitrosamines (N-NAs) in food ⁽¹⁾. In this opinion, the Authority assessed the 10 carcinogenic N-nitrosamines (TCNAs) known to occur in food, namely N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), N-nitrosomethylethylamine (NMEA), N-nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA), N-nitrosodipropylamine (NDPA), N-nitrosodibutylamine (NDBA), N-nitrosomethylaniline (NMA), N-nitrososarcosine (NSAR), N-nitrosomorpholine (NMOR), N-nitrosopiperidine (NPIP) and N-nitrosopyrrolidine (NPYR). It concluded that the margin of exposure (MOE) for TCNAs at higher exposure levels raises a health concern.
- (2) The Authority recommended that more occurrence data is gathered on the presence of TCNAs in processed meat and other processed foods and on products cooked in different ways, with and without the addition of the food additives nitrates (E 251-252) and nitrites (E249-250). It also recommended that data on the possible occurrence in food of carcinogenic N-NAs other than the TCNAs is obtained. In addition, it recommended that further work is performed to standardise a sensitive analytical method to quantify the carcinogenic N-NAs, both volatile and non-volatile, in different food products. Finally, the Authority recommended that more information is gathered on the factors that lead to relatively high levels of N-NAs in certain foods in order to be able to identify the measures that avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in those foods.
- (3) The results of the monitoring of N-nitrosamines should be reliable and comparable, and it is of particular importance that the method of analysis has a low Limit of Quantification (LOQ). It is therefore appropriate to make recommendations on the sampling and methods of analysis.
- (4) It is therefore appropriate to recommend the monitoring of N-NAs in food, the identification of the factors resulting in their high levels, and to gather more information on the measures recommended to be taken to avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in these foodstuffs,

HAS ADOPTED THIS RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) Member States in collaboration with food business operators should monitor the occurrence of N-NAs, or at least of TCNAs, in food, in particular in cured meat products, processed fish, alcoholic beverages, processed vegetables, processed cereals, milk and dairy products, and fermented, pickled and spiced foods.
- (2) The sampling for monitoring purposes is recommended to be done in accordance with Commission Regulation (EC) No 333/2007 ⁽²⁾. Methods of analysis should be based on tandem mass spectrometry (MS/MS) coupled either to liquid (LC-MS/MS) or gas chromatography (GC-MS/MS). Where detection via thermal energy analyzer (TEA) or other methods of trace elements and processing contaminants in foodstuffs (OJ L 88, 29.3.2007, p. 29. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2007/333/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ EFSA CONTAM Panel (EFSA Panel on Contaminants in the Food Chain, Scientific Opinion on the risk assessment of N-nitrosamines in food. *EFSA Journal* 2023; 21(3):7884, 278 pp. <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2023.7884>.

⁽²⁾ Commission Regulation (EC) No 333/2007 of 28 March 2007 laying down the methods of sampling and analysis for the control of the levels of trace elements and processing contaminants in foodstuffs (OJ L 88, 29.3.2007, p. 29. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2007/333/oj>).

- (3) The limit of quantification (LOQ) should be lower than 1 µg/kg for the determination of the presence of each of the TCNAs other than NSAR, and not higher than 5 µg/kg for other N-NAs. For NSAR, the LOQ should be as low as possible.
- (4) Member States, in collaboration with food business operators, should carry out investigations to identify the factors leading to high levels of N-NAs in food, and should gather information on the measures to be taken to avoid or reduce the presence of N-NAs in the concerned foods.
- (5) Member States and food business operators should provide the data gathered to the Authority for compilation into one database in line with the requirements of the Authority's Guidance on Standard Sample Description (SSD) for Food and Feed and the Authority's additional specific reporting requirements ⁽³⁾. In the case of processed meat and other processed foods, they should report whether nitrates or nitrites were used as food additive. In case of reporting the sum of TCNA, in addition to the levels of the individual N-nitrosamines, the sum reported should be the lower bound sum of the individual N-nitrosamines.

Done at Brussels, 21 October 2026.

For the Commission
Olivér VÁRHELYI
Member of the Commission

⁽³⁾ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/call/call-continuous-collection-chemical-contaminants-occurrence-data-0>.