

Limits of Aflatoxins in Chinese Herbal Medicines

The Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (“CMCHK”) is a statutory body established under the Chinese Medicine Ordinance and is responsible for implementing regulatory measures for Chinese medicine. The Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office of the Department of Health is providing professional and administrative support to the CMCHK.

With reference to the limits in the Pharmacopoeia of the People’s Republic of China (2020 edition), the CMCHK has set the limits for aflatoxins in 17 Chinese herbal medicines and their decoction pieces. From 31 December 2022 onwards, the Department of Health has incorporated aflatoxins as one of the testing parameters into market surveillance programme of Chinese herbal medicines.

Please refer to the table below for the limits of aflatoxins in Chinese herbal medicines set by the CMCHK:

Name of Chinese herbal medicine		Limit of aflatoxin B ₁ (Not more than)	Limit of aflatoxins (Sum of B ₁ , B ₂ , G ₁ and G ₂) (Not more than)
1	Semen Arecae	5µg/kg	10µg/kg
2	Semen Cassiae		
3	Hirudo		
4	Semen Myristicae		
5	Bombyx Batryticatus		
6	Semen Persicae		
7	Semen Platycladi		
8	Radix Polygalae		
9	Fructus Quisqualis		
10	Scolopendra		
11	Scorpio		
12	Semen Sterculiae Lychnophorae		
13	Rhizoma Corydalis		
14	Eupolyphaga seu Steleophaga		
15	Aspongopus		
16	Nidus Vespae		
17	Unprocessed Semen Strychni		

For more information on herbal medicines and aflatoxins, please refer to the pamphlet below (Chinese version only).