

Leave-on hair preparations (leave-in conditioners, tonics/dressings, styling aids, hair sprays, color sprays): HMTc Standard

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CITE AS

Pendergrass, K. (2026). Leave-on hair preparations (leave-in conditioners, tonics/dressings, styling aids, hair sprays, color sprays): HMTc Standard (Standard No. 10.83138/hmtc.std.13.leave-on-hair-preparations). Institute of Contaminant Standards.
<https://doi.org/10.83138/hmtc.std.13.leave-on-hair-preparations>
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KEYWORDS

heavy metals, food safety, dietary exposure

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This revision 2026-08.

CORRESPONDENCE

Corrections are logged publicly on the article page, each with its date, the affected value, and the source that resolved it.

Abstract

The Heavy Metal Tested & Certified heavy-metal-safety standard for leave-on hair preparations (leave-in conditioners, tonics/dressings, styling aids, hair sprays, color sprays) in Cosmetics and Personal Care: Leave-on, evaluated on finished leave-on cosmetic, TOTAL CONTENT as placed on market (ug/kg of product as sold), on the technically-unavoidable-impurity basis every instrument in this family uses. Not a migration/leachate basis, not a dietary basis, not an ingredient purity specification.. 5 of 11 panel analytes publish a numeric limit taken from the strictest applicable government maximum; the remainder are held under mandatory control or a substantiated not-material determination.

1 | How every number on this standard is set

HMTc Method v2.0, government-limit-only initial setting: every numeric cell is the strictest applicable sovereign maximum for this exact leave-on cosmetic form expressed as total content of the finished product as placed on market, or a disclosed read-across where the exact cell is unregulated, or a substantiated not-material determination, or a control. No cell is occurrence-derived, no cell is precautionary or feasibility-adjusted, and no cell is anchored on an ingredient or colour-additive purity specification.

2 | Master limit table

All values in ppb (µg/kg), as consumed basis. A brand meeting every value qualifies for the mark.

ANALYTE	TIER	HMTC LIMIT	BASIS
Lead (Pb)	Tier 1	1,000	government maximum level
Cadmium (Cd)	Tier 1	100	government maximum level
Total arsenic (tAs)	Tier 2	500	government maximum level
Inorganic arsenic (iAs)	Tier 1	≤ tAs	bounded by tAs (reflex speciation)
Mercury, total (tHg)	Tier 1	100	government maximum level
Methylmercury (MeHg)	Tier 1	≤ tHg	bounded by tHg (reflex speciation)
Nickel (Ni)	Tier 2	10,000	government maximum level
Tin (Sn)	Tier 2	3,750,000	human-grade read-across (European Union)
Aluminium (Al)	Tier 2	560,000	human-grade read-across (European Union)
Total chromium (Cr)	Tier 2	50	human-grade read-across (AU)
Hexavalent chromium (Cr-VI)	Tier 2	5	human-grade read-across (European Union)

3 | Derivation – where each number comes from

Every cell traces to one named sovereign maximum level (the strictest for the nearest analog), or to an explicit control, not-material, or species-bounded determination. No occurrence statistic selects a certification value.

ANALYTE	HMTC	SOVEREIGN ANALOG / DETERMINATION
Lead (Pb)	1,000	government maximum level
Cadmium (Cd)	100	government maximum level

Total arsenic (tAs)	500	government maximum level
Inorganic arsenic (iAs)	$\leq$ tAs	iAs carries no product-specific sovereign cell; it is a component of and bounded by its parent total tAs (iAs $\leq$ tAs), an enforceable ceiling via reflex speciation rather than an empty cell.
Mercury, total (tHg)	100	government maximum level
Methylmercury (MeHg)	$\leq$ tHg	MeHg carries no product-specific sovereign cell; it is a component of and bounded by its parent total tHg (MeHg $\leq$ tHg), an enforceable ceiling via reflex speciation rather than an empty cell.
Nickel (Ni)	10,000	government maximum level
Tin (Sn)	3,750,000	European Union — human-food analog
Aluminium (Al)	560,000	European Union — human-food analog
Total chromium (Cr)	50	AU — human-food analog
Hexavalent chromium (Cr-VI)	5	European Union — human-food analog

4 | Cite this standard

Pendergrass, K. (2026). *Leave-on hair preparations (leave-in conditioners, tonics/dressings, styling aids, hair sprays, color sprays): HMTc standard* (Standard No. 10.83138/hmtc.std.13.leave-on-hair-preparations). Institute of Contaminant Standards. <https://doi.org/10.83138/hmtc.std.13.leave-on-hair-preparations>

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References

- [1] AU — human-food maximum levels
Binds Cr. Strictest applicable human-food sovereign maximum for the nearest analog.
MAXIMUM LEVEL
- [2] European Union — human-food maximum levels
Binds Sn, Al, Cr-VI. Strictest applicable human-food sovereign maximum for the nearest analog.
MAXIMUM LEVEL

STATUS AND LICENCE

A normative certification standard, editorially reviewed and version-controlled in-house; every value traces to a named sovereign maximum level, disclosed in the derivation. © 2026

COMPETING INTERESTS

This briefing is published by the Heavy Metal Tested & Certified (HMTc) program, operated by the Institute of Contaminant Standards. Its statements about government

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regulations, toxicology, and occurrence are sourced to the cited primary and expert-body records and to the independently maintained Heavy Metal Index; the program's own certification thresholds are not used as evidence for any factual claim made here.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The works this reference draws on are listed in full in the references above and on the briefing page at <https://heavymetalcertified.com/standards/leave-on-hair-preparations>. Primary legal instruments and expert-body assessments are named with their public identifiers; the underlying occurrence and toxicology corpus is maintained on the Heavy Metal Index.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This revision 2026-08. The full dated record is maintained at <https://heavymetalcertified.com/standards/leave-on-hair-preparations>.