

Soups, broths and stocks: HMTc Standard

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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 soups, broths and stocks in Prepared and Packaged Meals, evaluated on as consumed / ready-to-serve (reconstituted to serving strength; dry-mix and bouillon assessed as prepared, not as the concentrate). A composite meal has no sovereign maximum of its own, so 7 of 11 panel analytes publish a disclosed read-across from the strictest applicable principal-component 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 default; COMPOSITE — disclosed read-across from strictest applicable principal-component sovereign ML; never occurrence-derived)

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	20	human-grade read-across ()
Cadmium (Cd)	Tier 1	40	human-grade read-across ()
Total arsenic (tAs)	Tier 2	500	human-grade read-across ()

Inorganic arsenic (iAs)	Tier 1	50	human-grade read-across ()
Mercury, total (tHg)	Tier 1	10	human-grade read-across ()
Methylmercury (MeHg)	Tier 1	n/m	not material in this matrix
Nickel (Ni)	Tier 2	400	human-grade read-across ()
Tin (Sn)	Tier 2	control	measured every lot; no human-food maximum
Aluminium (Al)	Tier 2	control	measured every lot; no human-food maximum
Total chromium (Cr)	Tier 2	500	screening ceiling (Hong Kong)
Hexavalent chromium (Cr-VI)	Tier 2	n/m	not material in this matrix

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)	20	— human-food analog
Cadmium (Cd)	40	— human-food analog
Total arsenic (tAs)	500	— human-food analog
Inorganic arsenic (iAs)	50	— human-food analog
Mercury, total (tHg)	10	— human-food analog

Aluminium (Al)	control	No credible regulator sets an aluminium maximum level for a soup, stock or bouillon, or for any principal component of one. Instruments checked: EU 2023/915 and EU 2024/1987 (no aluminium entry), Codex CXS 193 (no aluminium entry), FSANZ Schedule 19 (aluminium appears only as infant-formula MLs of 500 and 1000 ug/kg, Category 1 scope), Hong Kong Cap. 132V Part 2 Schedule (no aluminium entry), and US FDA, Health Canada and UK dietary instruments (no aluminium ML). Aluminium reaches the credible register only in basis families that cannot anchor a food-content cell: drinking-water parametric values (EU 2020/2184 and US 21 CFR 165.110 at 200 ug/L, Health Canada at 2900 ug/L), food--contact-material specific migration limits (EU 10/2011), and toy migration limits. Aluminium--containing additive maxima exist only in non-credible-tier instruments and are additive-use levels, not contaminant ceilings. Aluminium is therefore a mandatory reported cell with no invented ceiling.
Total chromium (Cr)	500	government maximum level
Hexavalent chromium (Cr-VI)	n/m	Hexavalent chromium is reduced to Cr-III in a cooked, wet, organic-rich matrix; a Cr-VI result in soup or broth is an artifact of the total-chromium screen, not real exposure. No credible regulator sets a Cr-VI food ML.

4 | Cite this standard

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STATUS AND LICENCE

A normative certification standard, editorially reviewed and version-controlled in-house; every value traces to a named

COMPETING INTERESTS

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sovereign maximum level, disclosed in the derivation. © 2026 Institute of Contaminant Standards / Heavy Metal Certified. All rights reserved.

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/soups-broths-stocks>. 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.

Contaminant Standards. Its statements about government 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.

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This revision 2026-08. The full dated record is maintained at <https://heavymetalcertified.com/standards/soups-broths-stocks>.