

In Singapore, medicinal and other health-related products are regulated under various legislations such as the Medicines Act, the Poisons Act, the Medicines (Advertisement and Sale) Act and the Misuse of Drug Regulations. The control of health products is under the purview of Health Sciences Authority (HSA). Products that are presently subjected to licensing requirements under HSA include Western medicinal products, Chinese proprietary medicines and Cosmetic products.

On the other hand, food and supplements of food nature come under the purview of the Singapore Food Agency (SFA). The import and sale of these products in Singapore are governed by the Sale of Food Act and the Food Regulations. Importers of these products are required to ensure that the food products they intend to import comply with the requirements of the Food Regulations, including the labelling requirements.

The classification of products in the food-health product interface is a challenging one as it is dependent on various factors. HSA and SFA have developed a classification tree* to assist companies determine the likely classification of their product. However, this tree serves only as a guide and companies are advised to seek confirmation with the respective Authority on the product's classification.

For detailed information on the regulation of health or food products in Singapore, you may visit the websites of the respective controlling agencies.

* [Click for more details](#)

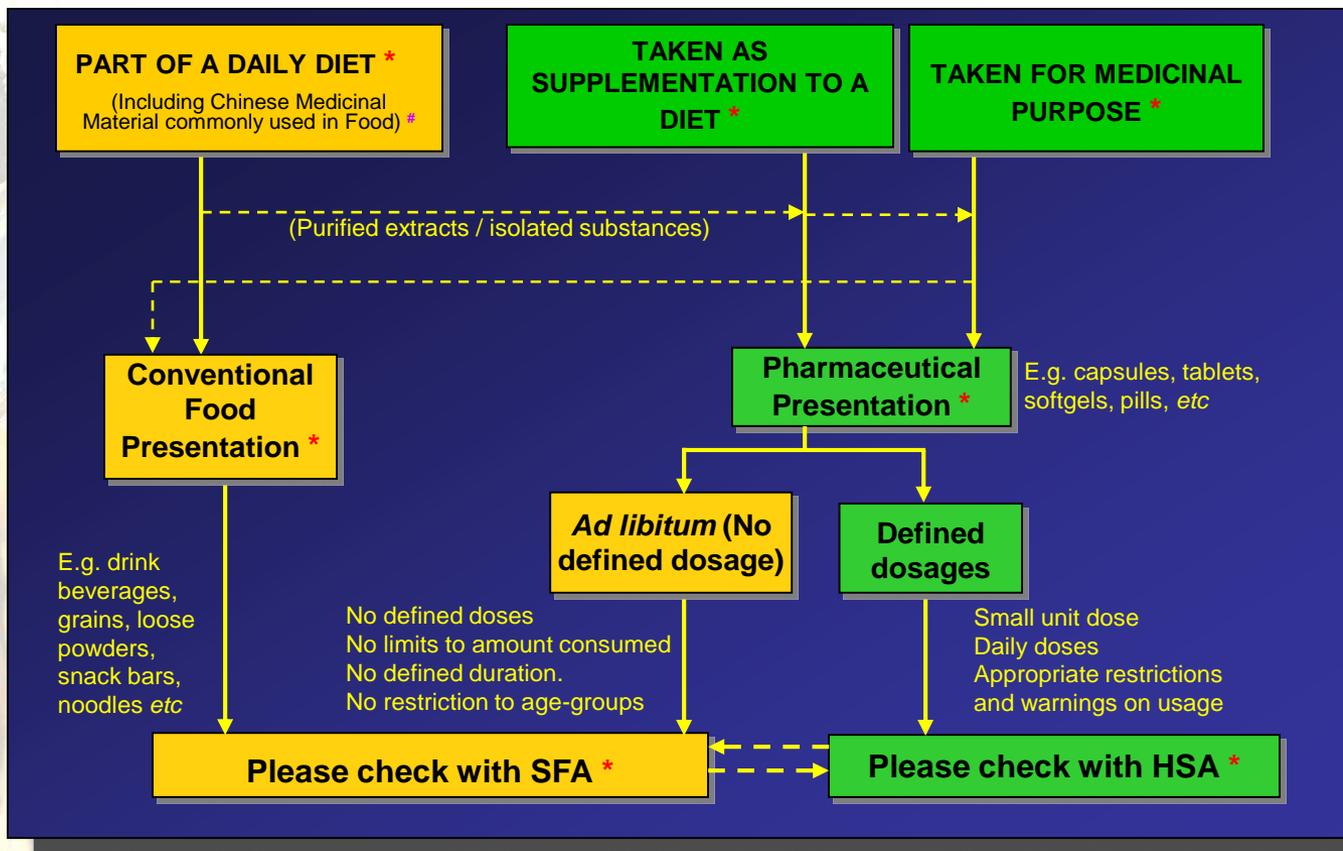
Classification Tree

Classification introduction

[Useful Links](#)

The following classification tree provides guidance in the classification of products whose presentation, ingredients or function fall into the food-health product interface.

Classification Tree for Products in the Food-Health Product Interface



Please note that the above serves only as a guide. It may be updated from time-to-time. You may contact the respective Agencies* for clarification if you are unsure of the classification of your product.

* [Click for more details](#)

#: A Chinese medicinal material (CMM) is a medicinal material (herb, animal part or mineral) used in the practice of traditional Chinese Medicines

Part of a Daily Diet

[← Back to Classification Tree](#)

[Definition](#)

[Examples of food substances](#)

Definition of “Part of a Daily Diet”

The product or substances of food nature that provide the nutrients (such as carbohydrates, protein, dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals) which contributes to a normal healthy diet. The product or substance may be used as part of a meal or taken to replace a meal.

❖ Examples of substances that can be taken as part of a diet:

1. Bee pollen
2. Bird nest
3. Chinese woodfrog / Hashima (*Rana Siccus*, 雪蛤 / 哈士蟆)
4. Chlorella
5. Chrysanthemum flower (*Flos Chrysanthemi*, 菊花)
6. Fermented soybean (*Semen Sojae Preparatum*, 淡豆豉)
7. Ginger (*Rhizoma Zingiberis Recens* / *Rhizoma Zingiberis*, 生姜 / 干姜)
8. Ginkgo seed (*Semen Ginkgo*, 白果)
9. Grosvenor momordica fruit (*Fructus Momordicae*, 罗汉果)
10. Honeysuckle immature flower (*Flos Lonicerae*, 金银花)
11. Jew's ear / Black fungus (*Auricularia*, 木耳)
12. Jujube seed (*Semen Ziziphi Spinosae*, 酸枣仁)
13. Lily bulb (*Bulbus Lillii*, 百合)
14. Noni (*Morinda citrifolia*)
15. Perilla leaf, fruit (*Perilla frutescens*, 紫苏叶/子)
16. Spirulina
17. Star anise fruit (*Fructus Anisi Stellati*, 八角茴香)
18. Tangerine peel (*Pericarpium Citri Reticulatae*, 陈皮)
19. Wolfberry fruit (*Fructus Lycii*, 枸杞)

❖ Examples of products that can be taken as part of a diet:

1. Energy food
2. Essence of Chicken / duck / fish / deer
3. Granules for making soup e.g. Ginseng Bah Kut Tea,
4. Herbal teas and drinks for general, regular consumption e.g. Ginseng tea (tea bags or granules), 夏桑菊 (Xia sang ju), 白花蛇舌草 (Bai hua she she cao)
5. Herbal jelly e.g. 龟苓膏 (Gui ling gao)
6. Meal replacement
7. Mushroom essence
8. Protein and carbohydrate-based supplements
9. Royal jelly
10. Sports supplements
11. Wine or vinegar drink containing herbal ingredients commonly used in food

[Back to Classification Tree](#)

Supplementation to a Diet

[← Back to Classification Tree](#)

[Definition](#)

[Examples of supplemental substances](#)

Definition of “Supplementation to a Diet”

This product or substance is taken to provide additional nutrients which cannot be obtained or is not adequately obtained through normal dietary means.

This product or substance is taken for nutritional or functional benefits by providing nutrients in amounts above those normally obtained from the diet or by providing nutrients which are not normally present in conventional food substances. The nutrients are taken for health maintenance, particularly for specific nutrient deficiencies or in times of stress when normal dietary intake is insufficient to address the additional nutrient need.

❖ Examples of substances that can be taken as a supplement of a diet:

1. Alpha lipoic acid
2. Alpha-linoleic acid
3. Amino acids e.g. Leucine, Lysine, Methionine, Glycine, Histidine, L-Arginine, Glutamine, Carnitine, Tyrosine, Taurine
4. Bee propolis
5. Bioflavonoids
6. Black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)
7. Brindle berry (*Garcinia cambogia*)
8. Bulk laxatives e.g. Psyllium (*Plantago*), Ispahugula
9. Cat's claw (*Uncaria tomentosa*)
10. Chitosan
11. Chondroitin
12. Echinacea (*E. purpurea*, *E. augustifolia*, *E. pallida*)
13. Enzyme isolates e.g. Bromelain, papain
14. Evening primrose oil
15. Flaxseed (*Linum usitatissimum*) oil
16. Garlic (*Allium sativum*) extracts e.g. oils, allicin, alliin
17. Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*) extracts e.g. oils
18. Ginseng products other than the tea form i.e. extracts (liquid or granules), capsule and tablet
19. Glucosamine
20. Green tea extracts e.g. polyphenols
21. Guarana (*Paullina cupana*) extracts
22. Herbal or floral teas with documented health functions e.g. Rooibos tea, Chamomile tea, SOD tea e.g. 二十四味凉茶
23. Inositol hexaniacinate
24. Inositol hexaphosphate
25. Isoflavones
26. Melatonin
27. Methylsulphonylmethane
28. Milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*)
29. Omega-3 or Omega-6 oils e.g. Eicopentaenoic acid (EPA), Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)
30. Pycnogenol
31. Phosphatidylcholine
32. Phosphatidylserine
33. Plant sterols including phytosterols, phytoestrogen and beta-sitosterol
34. Prebiotics including fructo-oligosaccharides
35. Probiotics (In non-milk based products) including Lactobacillus, Streptococcus thermophilus, Bifidobacteria
36. Protein isolates including whey protein isolates, creatine
37. Resveratrol
38. Saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*)
39. Senna (*Cassia senna*, *C. acutifolia*)
40. St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
41. Soyabean isolates
42. Starflower (*Borage officinalis*) seed oil
43. Tea tree extract
44. White willow (*Salix alba*)
45. Wild yam extracts

[Back to Classification Tree](#)

Taken for Medicinal Purpose

[← Back to Classification Tree](#)

[Definition](#)

[Examples of medicinal substances](#)

Definition of “Taken for a Medicinal Purpose”

This product or substance is taken for medicinal purpose e.g. treating, preventing or diagnosing disease; or carries medicinal claim.

❖ Examples of substances that can be taken for a medicinal purpose:

1. Bael fruit (*Aeglo marmelos*)
2. Baikal skullcap root (*Scutellaria baicalensis*, 黄芩)
3. Black cumin (*Nigella sativa*)
4. Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*)
5. Crowdipper (*Pinellia ternata*, 半夏)
6. Doubleteeth pubescent angelica root (*Angelica pubescens*, 独活)
7. Dyer's woad root (*Isatis tinctoria*, 板蓝根)
8. Gambir vine (*Uncaria rhynchophylla*, 钩藤)
9. Gypsum Fibrosum (石膏)
10. Magnolia vine (*Schisandra chinensis*, 五味子)
11. Olibanum (*Boswellia carterii*, 乳香)
12. Omum (*Ptychotis ajowan*)
13. Sandalwood (*Santalum album*)
14. Siler root (*Saposhnikovia divaricata*, 防风)
15. Huperzine A
16. Synthetic Caffeine
17. Charcoal
18. Vitamin K

❖ Examples of products that can be taken for a medicinal purpose:

1. Chinese Proprietary Medicines
2. Traditional Indian Medicines (e.g. Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani)
3. Traditional Malay Medicines (e.g. Jamu)
4. Western Pharmaceutical Drugs (e.g. Huperzine A, Synthetic Caffeine)

[Back to Classification Tree](#)

Definitions

[← Back to Classification Tree](#)

[Conventional Presentation](#)

[Pharmaceutical Presentation](#)

Presentation

The presentation of a product refers to its external appearance. Generally, food products would be presented in conventional food presentation and health products in the pharmaceutical presentation.



Conventional Food Presentation

Refers to the presentation of products in the conventional food format, including drink beverages, grains, loose powders, snack bars, noodles, soups, jelly, cereals, spreads, dairies, granules, drops etc and any other presentations as may be allowed by the Singapore Food Agency.

Pharmaceutical Presentation

Refers to products that are presented in the pharmaceutical presentation, including tablets, capsules, caplets, softgels, gelcaps and any other pharmaceutical presentations as may be allowed by the Health Sciences Authority.



[Back to Classification Tree](#)

Useful Links

[← Back to Classification Tree](#)

[Classification introduction](#)

Websites related to regulation of health products in Singapore

- [HSA Website](#) *

Websites related to regulation of food products in Singapore

- [SFA Website](#) *

* Click for more details