

MICROBIOLOGICAL STANDARDS FOR READY-TO-EAT-FOOD

Ready-to-eat food means any article of food that is made available for sale for direct human consumption without the need for cooking or any other form of processing to eliminate, or reduce to a microbiological standard specified in the Eleventh Schedule, any pathogenic or other micro-organism of concern in the article of food; and includes cup noodles, fruit juice cordial, squash or syrup, powdered beverages and other concentrated food which are meant to be reconstituted or diluted with fluids before consumption (Regulation 35(2), Food Regulations).

The microbiological standards for ready-to-eat food are as follows:

(I) Enterobacteriaceae and *Escherichia coli* (Part 1 of Eleventh Schedule)

- 1) The amount of Enterobacteriaceae (including *Escherichia coli* of any strain) detected in any ready-to-eat food, other than the ready-to-eat food mentioned in paragraph 2, must be less than 10,000 colony forming units per gram (for solid food) or millilitre (for liquid food).
- 2) Paragraph 1 does not apply to any ready-to-eat food-
 - a) that is fresh fruit, fresh vegetable or ripened cheese; or
 - b) that contains as an ingredient one or more of the ready-to-eat food mentioned in subparagraph (a)
- 3) The amount of *Escherichia coli* of any strain detected in any ready-to-eat food must be less than 100 colony forming units per gram (for solid food) or millilitre (for liquid food).

(II) Pathogens (Part 2 of Eleventh Schedule)

- 1) The amount of pathogen of the type specified in the first column of the following table that is detected in any ready-to-eat food must be less than the number of colony forming units specified for that pathogen in the second column of the table:

Pathogen	Colony forming units per gram (for solid food) or millilitre (for liquid food)
<i>Bacillus cereus</i>	200
<i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	100
<i>Coagulase-positive Staphylococcus aureus</i>	100

- 2) Where any ready-to-eat food is a type of ready-to-eat raw seafood, the amount of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* detected in the ready-to-eat food must be less less than 100 colony forming units per gram (for solid food) or millilitre (for liquid food).
- 3) Any pathogen not mentioned in paragraph 1 or 2 (whether common, or introduced in any way, to the ready-to-eat food) must not be detected in any ready-to-eat food.