

Foods Known to Contain Naturally Occurring Formaldehyde

I. Fruits & Vegetables

Food type	Level (mg/kg)
Apple	6.3 – 22.3
Apricot	9.5
Banana	16.3
Beetroot	35
Bulb vegetables (e.g. onion)	11.0
Cabbage	5.3
Carrot	6.7 – 10
Cauliflower	26.9
Cucumber	2.3 – 3.7
Grape	22.4
Green Onion	13.3 – 26.3
Kohlrabi	31
Pear	38.7 – 60
Plum	11.2
Potato	19.5
Spinach	3.3 – 7.3
Tomato	5.7 – 13.3
Water-melon	9.2
White Radish	3.7 – 4.4
Shiitake mushroom (dried)	100 – 406
Shiitake mushroom (raw)	6 – 54.4

II. Meat and meat products

Food type	Level (mg/kg)
Beef	4.6
Pig	5.8 – 20
Sheep	8
Poultry	2.5 – 5.7
Processed meat products (including ham and sausages)	≤ 20.7
Liver paste	≤ 11.9

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III. Dairy products

Food type	Level (mg/kg)
Goat's Milk	1
Cow's Milk	≤ 3.3
Cheese	≤ 3.3

IV. Seafood

Food type	Level (mg/kg)
Cod	4.6 – 34
Shrimp (raw)	1 – 2.4
Squid	1.8
Fish ball	6.8
Crustacean	1 – 98
Bombay-duck	≤ 140

Formaldehyde was also reported in studies to develop after death in marine fish and crustaceans and accumulate during the frozen storage of some fish species. Its levels can be as high as 400 mg/kg in Bombay-duck after cold storage.

V. Others

Food type	Level (mg/kg)
Alcoholic beverage	0.02 – 3.8
Soft drinks	8.7
Brewed coffee	3.4 – 4.5
Instant coffee	10 – 16
Syrup	<1 – 1.54

Sources: From World Health Organization and others.