

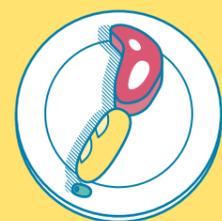
Monitoring what's in our food with the Total Diet Study

The Ministry for Primary Industries' Total Diet Study is about finding out what's in our foods and how we can keep it safe.

Approximately every five years, MPI carries out the Total Diet Study which is a national survey of common foods in a typical diet to assess our exposure to certain chemicals such as agricultural compounds, contaminants and nutrients.

It is used to identify any potential food safety risks to New Zealanders, as well as monitor changes to what we eat over time.

Choosing foods to test



In every TDS, the foods sampled and chemicals tested for are subject to public consultation prior to the start of the study.



Foods that make up approximately 90% of an average kiwi diet are selected and tested.



This equates to around 130 of the most common food types being sampled and tested in the TDS.



We also test foods that are known sources of some contaminants to ensure that these do not occur at exposures that might present a food safety risk.

How do we know what's safe and what's not?

There are two key steps involved in assessing whether or not there is a food safety risk from results from the TDS:



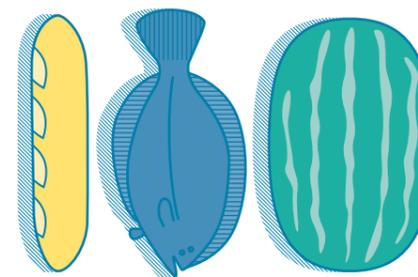
1 We use simulated diets for different ethnic, age, and gender groups to estimate how much of a particular food would be consumed on average over a fortnight. This allows us to calculate dietary exposure to the chemicals and contaminants, or intakes of the nutrients found in the TDS.

2 Once the levels of exposure for each group has been estimated, these are compared to national and international food safety standards and guidance material for each chemical and contaminant to determine if there is a potential risk to consumers. Nutrients are also checked to see if dietary needs are being met or exceeded.

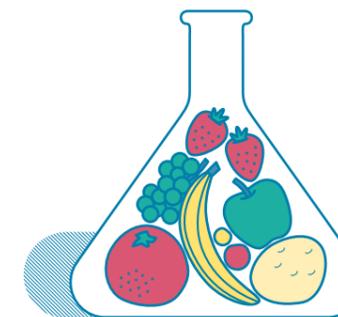
How food is tested



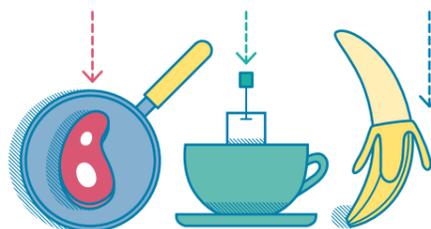
We collect food samples over a calendar year from 4 main centres in New Zealand – Auckland, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin.



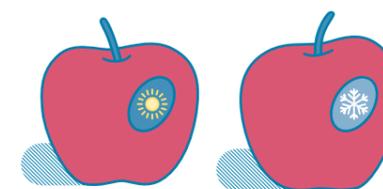
On average we test over 100 different food types during every TDS.



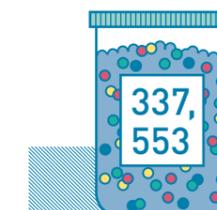
Foods are tested for priority chemicals. This includes a large number of agricultural chemicals, as well as contaminants and nutrient elements



All foods are prepared as they would be consumed. For example meat is cooked, tea is brewed and bananas are peeled before they are tested.



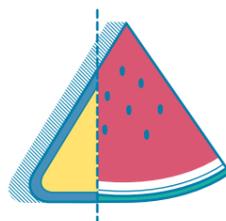
Each food is sampled and tested twice throughout the year to account for seasonal variations.



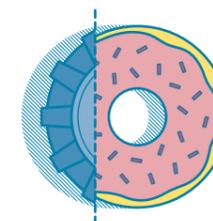
In the most recent 2016 TDS, we had a total of 337,553 individual test results for the 132 foods sampled.

What we've found

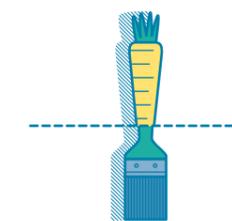
The TDS has been carried out in New Zealand since 1974. In the most recent 2016 TDS, we tested 4,300 individual food samples and found:



The food New Zealanders eat has a high level of safety in regard to chemical hazards that might be present in the food supply.



Exposure to agricultural chemicals and contaminants from food remains low.



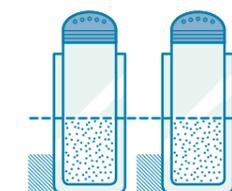
Most age groups are being exposed to 30-40% less lead in foods than in 2009.



Higher than expected levels of aluminium in some baked goods; however we assess that the potential public health risk is low.



Thanks to the fortification of bread with iodised salt we are, for the first time since the 1990's, getting enough iodine in our foods for a healthy diet.



Sodium intake in our diets have not changed since the last TDS.