

# C O D E X   A L I M E N T A R I U S

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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## STANDARD FOR CANNED BABY FOODS

CXS 73-1981

Adopted in 1981. Amended in 1983, 1985, 1987, 1989, 2017, 2023.

**2023 Amendments**

Following decisions taken at the Forty-sixth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in December 2023, the food additives provisions were amended in this standard and have been included in the *General Standard for Food Additives* (GSFA) (CXS 192-1995)<sup>1</sup> in line with the process of alignment of all food additive provisions with the GSFA. Amendments were also made in Section 7 Packaging and Section 9.5 Information for utilization.

## 1. SCOPE

- 1.1 Baby foods are foods intended primarily for use during the normal infant's weaning period and also for the progressive adaptation of infants and children to ordinary food. They may be either in ready-to-eat form or in dry form requiring reconstitution with water only. They do not include products covered by the *Standard for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes Intended for Infants* (CXS 72-1981)<sup>2</sup> or by the *Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children* (CXS 74-1981).<sup>3</sup>
- 1.2 Baby foods in ready-to-eat form are processed by heat before or after being sealed in their containers, and baby foods in dry form are processed by physical means, in each case so as to prevent spoilage.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The term *infant* means a person not more than 12 months of age.
- 2.2 The term *young children* means persons from the age of more than 12 months up to the age of 3 years.
- 2.3 The term *calorie* means a kilocalorie or "large calorie" (1 kilojoule is equivalent to 0.239 kilocalories).

## 3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

### 3.1 Composition

- 3.1.1 Baby foods may be prepared from any suitable nutritive material that is used, recognized or commonly sold as an article or ingredient of food, including spices.
- 3.1.2 Vitamins and minerals may only be added in accordance with the legislation of the country in which the food is sold.
- 3.1.2.1 Vitamins and/or minerals added in accordance with Section 3.1.2 should be selected from the *Advisory Lists of Nutrient Compounds for Use in Foods for Special Dietary Uses intended for Infants and Children* (CXG 10-1979).<sup>4</sup>
- 3.1.2.2 The amount of sodium derived from the added vitamins and/or minerals shall be within the limits indicated for sodium in Section 3.1.3.
- 3.1.3 The total sodium content of the products shall not exceed 200 mg Na/100 g, calculated on the ready-to-eat basis, in accordance with directions for use. The addition of salt (NaCl) to fruit products and dessert products based on fruit is not permitted.

### 3.2 Consistency and particle size

- 3.2.1 Ready-to-eat baby foods are homogeneous or comminuted in the following forms:
- strained:** food of a fairly uniform, small-particle size which does not require and does not encourage chewing before being swallowed;
  - junior:** food that ordinarily contains particles of a size to encourage chewing by infants and children.
- 3.2.2 Dry baby foods, after reconstitution with water or other suitable liquid, approximate to the consistency and particle size of strained or junior foods under Section 3.2.1.

### 3.3 Purity requirements

All ingredients, including optional ingredients, shall be clean, of good quality, safe and with excessive fibre removed where necessary. Fish, meat and poultry ingredients shall be practically free of bone pieces.

### 3.4 Specific prohibition

The product and its components shall not have been treated by ionizing radiation.

#### 4. FOOD ADDITIVES

4.1 Acidity regulators, antioxidants, emulsifiers, packaging gases and thickeners used in accordance with Table 1 and Table 2 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995)<sup>5</sup> in food category 13.2 (Complementary foods for infants and young children) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this standard.

#### 4.2 Flavourings

Name of flavouring	Maximum use level
Vanilla extract	Good manufacturing practice
Ethyl vanillin	70 mg/kg
Vanillin	70 mg/kg

The flavouring used in products covered by this standard should comply with the *Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings* (CXG 66-2008).<sup>6</sup>

#### 4.3 Carry-over principle

Only the food additives listed in food category 13.2 (Complementary foods for infants and young children) of the CXS 192-1995<sup>5</sup> may be present in the foods conforming to this standard, as a result of carry-over from a raw material or other ingredient (including food additive) used to produce the food, subject to the following conditions:

- a) The amount of the food additive in the raw materials or other ingredients (including food additives) does not exceed the maximum level specified; and
- b) The food into which the food additive is carried over does not contain the food additive in greater quantity than would be introduced by the use of the raw materials or ingredients under good manufacturing practice, consistent with the provisions on carry-over in the Preamble of the CXS 192-1995.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5. CONTAMINANTS

5.1 The products covered by this standard<sup>i</sup> shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).<sup>6</sup>

5.2 The products covered by this standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides and/or veterinary drugs established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

#### 6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969),<sup>7</sup> and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

6.2 The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* (CXG 21-1997).<sup>8</sup>

#### 7. PACKAGING

The product shall be packed in containers which will safeguard the hygienic and other qualities of the food. If in ready-to-eat form, it shall be packed in hermetically sealed container.

#### 8. FILL OF CONTAINER

In the case of products in ready-to-eat form, the fill of container shall be:

- i) not less than 80 percent v/v for products weighing less than 150 g (5½ oz);
- ii) not less than 85 percent v/v for products in the weight range 150–250 g (9 oz); and
- iii) not less than 90 percent v/v for products weighing more than 250 g (9 oz)

of the water capacity of the container. The water capacity of the container is the volume of distilled water at 20 °C which the sealed container will hold when completely filled (see CXS 234-1999<sup>9</sup> [Special Foods]).

<sup>i</sup> Formerly CAC/RS 73-1976.

## 9. LABELLING

In addition to the requirements of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985),<sup>10</sup> the following specific provisions apply:

### 9.1 The name of the food

The name of the product shall be that of the major or characterizing ingredient(s) accompanied by words suitable to indicate the consistency or intended use.

### 9.2 List of ingredients

A complete list of ingredients shall be declared on the label in descending order of proportion, except that in the case of added vitamins and added minerals, these shall be arranged as separate groups for vitamins and minerals, respectively, and within these groups the vitamins and minerals need not be listed in descending order of proportion.

The specific name shall be declared for ingredients and food additives. In addition, appropriate class names for these ingredients and additives may be included on the label.

### 9.3 Declaration of nutritive value

The declaration of nutrition information shall contain the following information in the following order:

- (a) The amount of energy, expressed in calories (Kcal) and/or kilojoules (kJ), and the number of grammes of protein, carbohydrate and fat per 100 grammes of the food as sold as well as per specified quantity of the food as suggested for consumption;
- (b) in addition to any other nutritional information required by national legislation, the total quantity in the final product of each vitamin and mineral added according to Section 3.1.2, shall be declared per 100 g as well as according to the serving size of the food suggested for consumption.

### 9.4 Date marking and storage instructions

The date of minimum durability (preceded by the words "best before") shall be declared by the day, month and year in uncoded numerical sequence except that for products with a shelf-life of more than three months, the month and year will suffice. The month may be indicated by letters in those countries where such use will not confuse the consumer. In the case of products requiring a declaration of month and year only, and the shelf-life of the product is valid to the end of a given year, the expression "end (stated year)" may be used as an alternative.

In addition to the date, any special conditions for the storage of the food shall be indicated if the validity depends thereon.

Where practicable, storage instructions shall be in close proximity to the date marking.

### 9.5 Information for utilization

Directions as to the preparation and use of the food and its storage and keeping before and after the container has been opened, shall appear on the label or on the accompanying leaflet.

### 9.6 Additional requirements

The products covered by this standard are not breast-milk substitutes and shall not be presented as such.

## 10. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

For checking the compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in the *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999)<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup> relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> FAO and WHO. 1995. *General Standard for Food Additives*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 192-1995. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>2</sup> FAO and WHO. 1981. *Standard for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes Intended for Infants*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 72-1981. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>3</sup> FAO and WHO. 1981. *Standard for Processed Cereal-Based Foods for Infants and Young Children*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 74-1981. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>4</sup> FAO and WHO. 1979. *Advisory Lists of Nutrient Compounds for Use in Foods for Special Dietary Uses Intended for Infants and Children*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 10-1979. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>5</sup> FAO and WHO. 1995. *General Standard for Food Additives*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 192-1995. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>6</sup> FAO and WHO. 2008. *Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 66-2008. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>6</sup> FAO and WHO. 1995. *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 193-1995. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>7</sup> FAO and WHO. 1969. *General Principles of Food Hygiene*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 1-1969. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>8</sup> FAO and WHO. 1997. *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 21-1997. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>9</sup> FAO and WHO. 1999. *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 234-1999. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
- <sup>10</sup> FAO and WHO. 1985. *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 1-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.