

MYCOTOXINS | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1

Possible sources of exposure

-  Wheat and barley
-  Corn
-  Cereal based food (bread, cookies)
-  Fruit
-  Nuts
-  Cereal based beverages (beer, coffee)
-  Animal-based food
-  Breast milk (mothers exposed)

Occupational exposure (grain threshing, milling, food processing – activities that can result in contaminated dust or imply handling of contaminated materials)



2

How can mycotoxins enter your body?

Via ingestion 

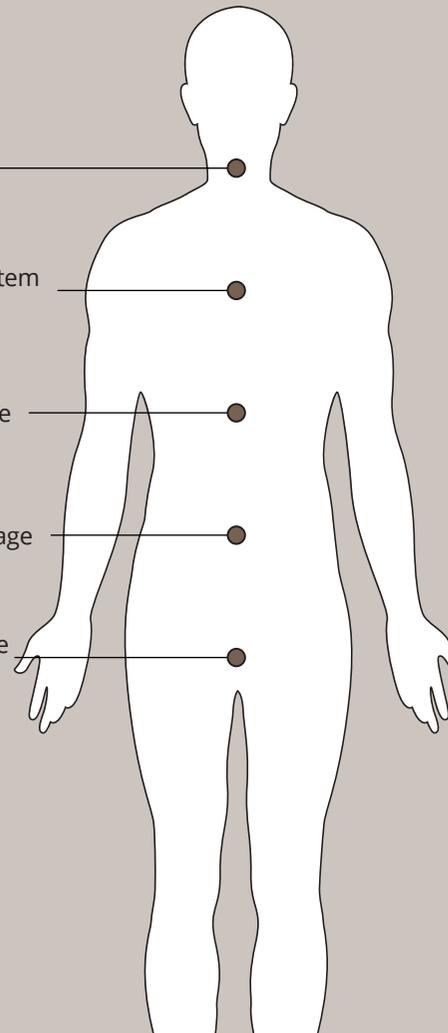
Via inhalation 

Via dermal absorption 

3

How might mycotoxins affect your health?

-  Cancer
-  Immune system dysfunction
-  Liver damage
-  Kidney damage
-  Reproductive toxicity



4

How can you reduce your exposure to mycotoxins?

-  **✗ Avoid** food stored for long periods
-  **✓ Keep** food dry and not too warm, stored properly and free of insects
-  **✓ Inspect** food (whole grains, nuts and dried fruits) for evidence of mould; discard rotten mouldy, discoloured or shrivelled food items
-  **✓ Buy** grains and nuts as fresh as possible and preferably locally grown, to avoid long transportation and storage periods
-  **✓ Ventilate** your home regularly
-  **✓ If** working in settings processing and/or handling relevant food and feed commodities, **avoid** inhaling the dust that can be emitted during tasks such as storage, loading, or milling contaminated materials and others, such as caring for animals in animal husbandry settings. **Use** the ventilation systems available and/or the respiratory protection equipment.
-  **✓ Use** protection gloves when handling products that might be contaminated (e.g. grains, nuts, dried fruit).

The EU has taken action to protect the citizens from mycotoxin exposure. For instance, EU legislation sets maximum levels for mycotoxins in food and feed to ensure they are not harmful to human or animal health.

For further information on how the European Union is protecting citizens read the [HBM4EU Mycotoxins Factsheet](#).