

Low Risk Foods

Under the FDA's regulations implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) for processing human foods, the agency determined that certain food processing activities are low risk when they are applied to specific foods. Below is FDA's complete list of these low risk activity/food combinations.

- Boiling gums, latexes, and resins;
- Chopping, coring, cutting, peeling, pitting, shredding, and slicing acid fruits and vegetables that have a pH less than 4.2 (e.g., cutting lemons and limes), baked goods (e.g., slicing bread), dried/ dehydrated fruit and vegetable products (e.g., pitting dried plums), dried herbs and other spices (e.g., chopping intact, dried basil), game meat jerky, gums/ latexes/resins, other grain products (e.g., shredding dried cereal), peanuts and tree nuts, and peanut and tree nut products (e.g., chopping roasted peanuts);
- Coating dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products (e.g., coating raisins with chocolate), other fruit and vegetable products except for non-dried, non-intact fruits and vegetables (e.g., coating dried plum pieces, dried pitted cherries, and dried pitted apricots with chocolate are low-risk activity/food combinations but coating apples on a stick with caramel is not a low-risk activity/food combination), other grain products (e.g., adding caramel to popcorn or adding seasonings to popcorn provided that the seasonings have been treated to significantly minimize pathogens, peanuts and tree nuts (e.g., adding seasonings provided that the seasonings have been treated to significantly minimize pathogens), and peanut and tree nut products (e.g., adding seasonings provided that the seasonings have been treated to significantly minimize pathogens));
- Drying/dehydrating (that includes additional manufacturing or is performed on processed foods) other fruit and vegetable products with pH less than 4.2 (e.g., drying cut fruit and vegetables with pH less than 4.2), and other herb and spice products (e.g., drying chopped fresh herbs, including tea);
- Extracting (including by pressing, by distilling, and by solvent extraction) from dried/dehydrated herb and spice products (e.g., dried mint), fresh herbs (e.g., fresh mint), fruits and vegetables (e.g., olives, avocados), grains (e.g., oilseeds), and other herb and spice products (e.g., chopped fresh min chopped dried mint);
- Freezing acid fruits and vegetables with pH less than 4.2 and other fruit and vegetable products with pH less than 4.2 (e.g., cut fruits and vegetables);
- Grinding/cracking/crushing/ milling baked goods (e.g., crackers), cocoa beans (roasted), coffee beans (roasted), dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products (e.g., raisins and dried legumes), dried/dehydrated herb and spice products (e.g., intact dried basil), grains (e.g., oats, rice, rye, wheat), other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., dried, pitted dates), other grain products (e.g., dried cereal), other herb and spice products (e.g., chopped dried herbs), peanuts and tree nuts, and peanut and tree nut products (e.g., roasted peanuts);
- Labeling baked goods that do not contain food allergens, candy that does not contain food allergens, cocoa beans (roasted), cocoa products that do not contain food allergens), coffee

beans (roasted), game meat jerky, gums/ latexes/resins that are processed foods, honey (pasteurized), jams/jellies/ preserves, milled grain products that do not contain food allergens (e.g., corn meal) or that are single-ingredient foods (e.g., wheat flour, wheat bran), molasses and treacle, oils, other fruit and vegetable products that do not contain food allergens (e.g., snack chips made from potatoes or plantains), other grain products that do not contain food allergens (e.g., popcorn), other herb and spice products (e.g., chopped or ground dried herbs), peanut or tree nut products, (provided that they are single ingredient, or are in forms in which the consumer can reasonably be expected to recognize the food allergen(s) without label declaration, or both (e.g., roasted or seasoned whole nuts, single ingredient peanut or tree nut flours)), processed seeds for direct consumption, soft drinks and carbonated water, sugar, syrups, trail mix and granola (other than those containing milk chocolate and provided that peanuts and/or tree nuts are in forms in which the consumer can reasonably be expected to recognize the food allergen(s) without label declaration), vinegar, and any other processed food that does not require time/temperature control for safety and that does not contain food allergens (e.g., vitamins, minerals, and dietary ingredients (e.g., bone meal) in powdered, granular, or other solid form);

- Making baked goods from milled grain products (e.g., breads and cookies);
- Making candy from peanuts and tree nuts (e.g., nut brittles), sugar/syrups (e.g., taffy, toffee), and saps (e.g., maple candy, maple cream);
- Making cocoa products from roasted cocoa beans;
- Making dried pasta from grains;
- Making jams, jellies, and preserves from acid fruits and vegetables with a pH of 4.6 or below;
- Making molasses and treacle from sugar beets and sugarcane;
- Making oat flakes from grains;
- Making popcorn from grains;
- Making snack chips from fruits and vegetables (e.g., making plantain and potato chips);
- Making soft drinks and carbonated water from sugar, syrups, and water;
- Making sugars and syrups from fruits and vegetables (e.g., dates), grains (e.g., rice, sorghum), other grain products (e.g., malted grains such as barley), saps (e.g., agave, birch, maple, palm), sugar beets, and sugarcane;
- Making trail mix and granola from cocoa products (e.g., chocolate), dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products (e.g., raisins), other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., chopped dried fruits), other grain products (e.g., oat flakes), peanut and tree nut products, and processed seeds for direct consumption, provided that peanuts, tree nuts, and processed seeds are treated to significantly minimize pathogens;
- Making vinegar from fruits and vegetables, other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., fruit wines, apple cider), and other grain products (e.g., malt);
- Mixing baked goods (e.g., types of cookies), candy (e.g., varieties of taffy), cocoa beans (roasted), coffee beans (roasted), dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products (e.g., dried

blueberries, dried currants, and raisins), dried/dehydrated herb and spice products (e.g., dried, intact basil and dried, intact oregano), honey (pasteurized), milled grain products (e.g., flour, bran, and corn meal), other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., dried, sliced apples and dried, sliced peaches), other grain products (e.g., different types of dried pasta), other herb and spice products (e.g., chopped or ground dried herbs, dried herb- or spice-infused honey, and dried herb- or spice-infused oils and/or vinegars), peanut and tree nut products, sugar, syrups, vinegar, and any other processed food that does not require time/temperature control for safety (e.g., vitamins, minerals, and dietary ingredients (e.g., bone meal) in powdered, granular, or other solid form);

- Packaging baked goods (e.g., bread and cookies), candy, cocoa beans (roasted), cocoa products, coffee beans (roasted), game meat jerky, gums/ latexes/resins that are processed foods, honey (pasteurized), jams/jellies/ preserves, milled grain products (e.g., flour, bran, corn meal), molasses and treacle, oils, other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., pitted, dried fruits; sliced, dried apples; snack chips), other grain products (e.g., popcorn), other herb and spice products (e.g., chopped or ground dried herbs), peanut and tree nut products, processed seeds for direct consumption, soft drinks and carbonated water, sugar, syrups, trail mix and granola, vinegar, and any other processed food that does not require time/temperature control for safety (e.g., vitamins, minerals, and dietary ingredients (e.g., bone meal) in powdered, granular, or other solid form);
- Pasteurizing honey;
- Roasting and toasting baked goods (e.g., toasting bread for croutons);
- Salting other grain products (e.g., soy nuts), peanut and tree nut products, and processed seeds for direct consumption; and
- Sifting milled grain products (e.g., flour, bran, corn meal), other fruit and vegetable products (e.g., chickpea flour), and peanut and tree nut products (e.g., peanut flour, almond flour).

Source: FDA FSMA regulations on Preventive Controls for Human Food, 21 CFR 117.3 (h)(3).

The FSMA regulations further define of some of the broad categories of foods that may be involved in low-risk activity/food combinations:

(i) Dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products includes only those processed food products such as raisins and dried legumes made without additional manufacturing/processing beyond drying/dehydrating, packaging, and/or labeling.

(ii) Other fruit and vegetable products includes those processed food products that have undergone one or more of the following processes: acidification, boiling, canning, coating with things other than wax/oil/resin, cooking, cutting, chopping, grinding, peeling, shredding, slicing, or trimming. Examples include flours made from legumes (such as chickpea flour), pickles, and snack chips made from potatoes or plantains. Examples also include dried fruit and vegetable products made with additional manufacturing/processing (such as dried apple slices; pitted,

dried plums, cherries, and apricots; and sulfited raisins). This category does not include dried/dehydrated fruit and vegetable products made without additional manufacturing/processing as described in item (i) above. This category also does not include products that require time/temperature control for safety (such as fresh-cut fruits and vegetables).

(iii) Peanut and tree nut products includes processed food products such as roasted peanuts and tree nuts, seasoned peanuts and tree nuts, and peanut and tree nut flours.

(iv) Processed seeds for direct consumption include processed food products such as roasted pumpkin seeds, roasted sunflower seeds, and roasted flax seeds.

(v) Dried/dehydrated herb and spice products includes only processed food products such as dried intact herbs made without additional manufacturing/processing beyond drying/dehydrating, packaging, and/or labeling.

(vi) Other herb and spice products includes those processed food products such as chopped fresh herbs, chopped or ground dried herbs (including tea), herbal extracts (e.g., essential oils, extracts containing more than 20 percent ethanol, extracts containing more than 35 percent glycerin), dried herb- or spice-infused honey, and dried herb- or spice-infused oils and/or vinegars. This category does not include dried/dehydrated herb and spice products made without additional manufacturing/processing beyond drying/dehydrating, packaging, and/or labeling as described in item (v) above. This category also does not include products that require time/temperature control for safety, such as fresh herb-infused oils.

(vii) Grains include barley, dent- or flint-corn, sorghum, oats, rice, rye, wheat, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat and oilseeds for oil extraction (such as cotton seed, flax seed, rapeseed, soybeans, and sunflower seed).

(viii) Milled grain products include processed food products such as flour, bran, and corn meal.

(ix) Baked goods include processed food products such as breads, brownies, cakes, cookies, and crackers. This category does not include products that require time/temperature control for safety, such as cream-filled pastries.

(x) Other grain products include processed food products such as dried cereal, dried pasta, oat flakes, and popcorn. This category does not include milled grain products as described in [item (viii) above or baked goods as described in item (ix) above.

Source: FDA FSMA regulations on Preventive Controls for Human Food, 21 CFR 117.3 (g)(2).