

Q: Will cooking or processing remove mycotoxins?

A: Cooking or processing will **NOT** remove all mycotoxins as some are stable in heat. There is no practical way of removing most mycotoxins without destroying the food.

Q: How can we know if mycotoxins are in our food?

A: The Food Storage and Prevention of Infestation Division's Pesticide Residue and Mycotoxin Laboratory conducts regulatory testing of food intended for commerce in order to protect consumers.



**Ministry of Industry,
Investment and
Commerce**

**Food Storage and Prevention
of Infestation Division**

Ensuring Safety and Wholesomeness

MYCOTOXIN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

For further information please contact:

THE CHIEF FOOD STORAGE OFFICER

FOOD STORAGE & PREVENTION OF INFESTATION DIVISION
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, INVESTMENT & COMMERCE

15 GORDON TOWN ROAD, KINGSTON 6, JAMAICA, WI

TEL: (876) 927-1929-30 / (876) 977-6816-20

FAX: (876) 977-7515

E-mail: fs.admin@cwjamaica.com

Website: www.fspid.gov.jm

JULY 2010



©GARY MUNKVOLD

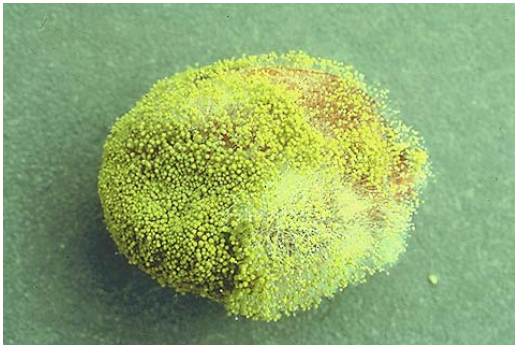
A GUIDE TO MYCOTOXINS

Q: What are mycotoxins?

A: Mycotoxins are poisons produced by certain types of moulds (fungi).

Q: What are moulds and where do they come from?

A: Moulds are yeast-like organisms which grow on food and other organic material. They germinate from microscopic bodies (spores) which are always present in air.



Peanut seed contaminated with *Aspergillus* sp.

Q: What conditions promote the germination of moulds?

A: Moulds require warmth, moisture and organic material in order to germinate.

Q: Are mycotoxins harmful?

A: Yes. Even very small amounts in food/feed can cause serious health problems.

Q: What problems can mycotoxins cause?

A: Mycotoxins can result in:

- Cancers;
- Tumours;
- Malnutrition;
- Spontaneous abortion in animals.

Q: Can I be affected by mycotoxins?

A: Yes. By ingesting food contaminated with mycotoxin producing fungi.

Q: What foods might contain myco-toxins?

A: Mycotoxins might be found in:

- Meat and milk from animals that have consumed contaminated feed;
- Peanuts, Corn and other grains.

Q: How can mycotoxin contamination be avoided?

A: By altering the conditions which promote the growth of moulds/fungi.



Peanuts contaminated with *Aspergillus** sp.

**Aspergillus* sp. is one kind of fungi that produces mycotoxins.