

Safety of Hydroxypropyl Methyl Cellulose as a Food Additive

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Summary

Hydroxypropyl methylcellulose (HPMC) which is a kind of cellulose ether, has only been used for food capsules and tablets with Health Claims under the limitations of Standard for Use since it was approved as a food additive in June 2003 in Japan. And now the Food Safety Commission and other Authorities are investigating and discussing abolishing this limitation in order to use HPMC for general foods. HPMC was evaluated as a low toxicity material by the Food Safety Commission because it has no absorption ability in the digestive tract, no carcinogenicity and no significant toxicity in terms of teratogenicity, generation reproductive toxicity and other studies. It is expected to be used for various food product applications because of its safety and unique characteristics as a material of vegetable origin.