



Useful tips

Use high-quality oils

Nickel is used as a catalyst for the hydrogenation of vegetable fats, but it is up to 99 % removed through suitable processes. For this reason, high-quality vegetable oils should be used.

Peel fruit and vegetables

As nickel (but also vitamins!) is found in a higher concentration in the skin, nickel consumption can be reduced by peeling all fruits. For example, a 50 % reduction is achieved for potatoes. Vegetables and fruit from areas with increased industrial nickel emissions should be avoided.

Use the right kitchenware

Sausage products and pâtés often contain nickel-rich innards. The storage of meat products in aluminium, high-grade steel or tinfoil (normal tins) does not result in an increase in the nickel content. When using chrome and nickel steels in the household, the release of nickel is increased in the case of foods with a high acidity in particular. Abrasion-proof, temperature-resistant kitchenware made from enamel, glass or plastic is recommended.

Avoid skin contact

During a low-nickel diet, intensive skin contact with objects containing nickel should be avoided. Fashion, silver and white gold jewellery, buttons, glasses frames as well as 1 € and 2 € coins contain nickel.

Last but not least

Unfortunately, important types of fruit and vegetables as well as recommendable wholemeal products would have to be avoided. White flour is the alternative. Despite all efforts to reduce nickel consumption, a balanced diet should be ensured. It's a question of reducing nickel. You will not manage to be completely nickel-free.

Recommended reading

Behr-Völtzer C., Hamm M., Vieluf D., Ring J.: Diät-empfehlungen bei Nahrungsmittelallergie. Allergo J 1997; 6: 197-203

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Nickel allergy

Avoid nickel!





Nickel allergy

15 % are affected

Around 15 % of the German population suffer from a nickel allergy. Often, but not always, the symptoms are limited to the skin. In around 30 % of the patients affected, nickel ingestion through food can stimulate the development of chronic inflammatory diseases.

Patients with atopic dermatitis, eczema, migraines, rheumatic symptoms and even chronic fatigue syndrome report the intensification of their symptoms after consuming things such as chocolate, nuts and certain types of meat, fruit and vegetables. Uncharacteristic general symptoms such as tiredness, a reduction in physical capacity, headaches as well as muscle and joint complaints may occur.

In such cases, a diet with reduced nickel content should be maintained. The required daily amount of 16 µg (nickel is an essential trace element) will very probably be attained even with a strictly observed diet that is low in nickel. However, a sufficient supply of vitamins, folic acid, carotene, potassium and magnesium should be ensured, as the consumption of some vegetable and grain products is reduced.

Identifying personal sources of nickel

Important sources of nickel in households are pots made from steel and pans made from chrome, nickel and steel, electric kettles as well as coffee and espresso machines where the water is in direct contact with the heating coil. Coffee from a coffee machine can contain up to ten times more nickel than coffee that you brew yourself.

Tinplate tin cans (normal tins) and stainless steel are, however, quite safe. Water that has stood in fittings for a long time frequently contains high quantities of nickel. The draining of this water should become a habit. It should also be noted that nickel is present in tobacco smoke.

Reducing nickel in food

This isn't always easy, because the nickel content of food is influenced by the site of cultivation, the type of food, the age of the plant and the manner of processing. Diet recommendations can thus only take account of foods that are particularly good or bad at accumulating nickel. Although the amount of the individual food consumed should be taken into consideration alongside the total content in the food, the following recommendations will help to reduce nickel intake considerably.



Foods that frequently contain nickel

Milk and milk products	Hard cheese, easy-to-slice cheese, soft cheese, processed cheese
Meat and meat products, eggs	Innards such as liver and kidney, sausage products, sausages, pâtés, parfait
Fish and fish products	Pike, herring, smoked herring, lobster, sardines, mussels
Confectionary	Chocolate of any kind, confectionary made from fruit extracts, confectionary made from peanuts, almonds and nuts, marzipan, muesli bars, nougat, liquorice
Desserts	Almost all ready-made products
Spreads	Peanut butter, cherry and peach jam, vegetarian spreads
Drinks	Tea (especially black tea), cocoa and instant hot chocolate products, alcoholic drinks (including beer and wine)
Cereals and cereal products	Coarse wholemeal breads, bran, buckwheat, barley, wholemeal wheat flour, oatmeal (rolled oats), ready-made muesli, sprouts
Vegetables	Beans (white and kidney beans), peas (dried, yellow and green), soya beans, lentils, broccoli, spinach, asparagus, cabbage (Chinese, green, red, white and savoy cabbage), cooking herbs (particularly parsley)
Fruit	Bananas, cherries, peaches (including fruit juices), nuts such as cashews, hazelnuts, almonds, pecans, pistachios, walnuts



Foods that contain little nickel

Milk and milk products	Full-fat milk, skimmed milk, buttermilk, yoghurt, soured milk, ice cream, sweet and sour cream, quark, fresh cheese, layered quark, mozzarella
Meat and meat products, eggs	All types of meat (fresh or frozen), roast beef Homemade sliced cold meat, eggs (fresh!)
Fish and fish products	All types of fish except pike, herring, smoked herring, lobster, sardines, mussels
Confectionary	Soft and hard caramel, cakes and baked products made from wheat flour
Desserts	All desserts that are prepared at home, such as: stewed fruit, cold fruit soup, fruit quark, fruit ice cream, milk ice cream, blancmange and similar desserts bound with wheat starch and egg Warning: only use suitable fruits – see list of fruits
Spreads	Butter, clarified butter, lard, margarine, jam (except cherry/peach), honey
Drinks	Drinking water after draining the first 2 litres, mineral water, brewed filter coffee, milk, juice (only use suitable fruits), spritzer
Cereals and cereal products	Wheat bread, wheat starch, parboiled rice
Vegetables	All other vegetables (fresh where possible), potatoes
Fruit	Fruit, fresh or frozen food