What are Food Contact Materials?
“Food Contact Materials”, or FCMs for short, refers to all materials that come into contact with food.

Quantity is key
Even natural substances can interact with the body but would only cause adverse effects from a certain dose. It is the quantity which sets the risk.

Water:
Water is vital for leading a healthy lifestyle. We need water to remain hydrated and energised.
Adequate Daily Intake: around 2.5 litres

Coffee:
Coffee has antioxidants and nutrients that contribute to good health. Coffee increases your focus and can improve energy levels.
ADI: 400 milligrams

Soy sauce:
Soy sauce has some great health benefits: it is low in calories and very high in natural antioxidants.
ADI: 2 tablespoons (32 grams)

Natural migration occurs whenever two materials come into contact with each other
Migration is a natural and unavoidable phenomenon that occurs in all materials. Whenever two materials come into contact with each other, substances can migrate from one material into another. This also happens with food packaging and food.

Risk assessments make sure that Food Contact Materials are safe
A risk assessment is based on different elements to assess potential health risks associated with exposure to substance migration into the food.

Why is packaging so important?
Packaging plays an important role in ensuring the freshness of food, extending its shelf life and helps to improve the quality of products for consumers.

In a sustainable society, using modern packaging and storage systems, wastage is reduced dramatically to around

EFSA reports its conclusions to the European Commission. If approved, the substance can be used in FCMs. The substance is safe and suitable to be used in food contact according to the descriptions included in the technical dossier.
INSIDE FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE THAT MIGRATION IS SAFE?

=MIGRATION OF SUBSTANCES INTO FOOD OCCURS WITH ALL PACKAGING=
Migration happens whenever packaging — of any type — comes into contact with food. It is a natural physical process. The key point is that the level of migration is safe.

=PLASTICS ARE RIGOROUSLY TESTED TO MAKE SURE THAT MIGRATION - IF ANY - IS SAFE=
Testing conditions are specified legally, and need to be used by all actors performing tests in the value chain (from raw materials, packaging producers and to food packers). Tests are done at several stages in the value chain to ensure that the plastic sample is suitable in its end-use.

Take a sample of the plastic
Test in contact with a food simulant
Monitor migration under standardised conditions
Analyse the results to verify that safety limits are met

Food simulants - as prescribed by law, (e.g. olive oil) - mimic the properties of different food types under typical / worst case conditions.

WHAT DO THE TESTS SHOW?
The tests show how migration occurs in different food types under various conditions.
The tests enable us to determine if a plastic packaging can be used for a given food and its conditions of use.
The tests are designed to exaggerate the real use scenario and therefore to make sure that there is a safety margin. It assumes that all consumed food is in contact with the same packaging material.
These testing conditions ensure that migration — if any — is below the safe limit.

WITH ALL THESE DATA, WE CAN ENSURE THE SAFE USE OF THE PACKAGING
INSIDE FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS

HOW CAN WE MAKE SURE THAT MIGRATION IS SAFE?

At all stages of the value chain, materials are produced in a controlled, safe and consistent way.

NINE GOLDEN RULES OF ENSURING PACKAGING SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE SUPPLY CHAIN:

1. Assign management responsibilities for ensuring product safety, and train all operational personnel.
2. Implement quality assurance systems and policies to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.
3. Document all relevant information (e.g. product formulation, operating procedures), ensure correct material labelling, and implement traceability procedures.
4. Have procedures in place at production level to prevent any product contamination.
5. Conduct internal risk assessment including monitoring of raw materials and finished products. Verify compliance with documented specifications.
6. Ensure that procedural changes are managed and implemented properly.
7. Have a system for complaint handling, product recall and incident management in place.
8. Regularly carry out internal and supplier audits.
9. Adhere to an appropriate hygiene policy.

WHO ENSURES THE SAFETY OF FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS?

All of the different parties involved are required to issue a declaration of compliance that states product safety.

PROCESS FOLLOWS: EFSA’S RISK ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

ALL THIS ENSURES SAFE FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS