MOULDS AND MYCOTOXINS

Some of the compounds that moulds produce are useful, like antibiotics. Many of them, however, are harmful to human health, such as the mycotoxins. Mycotoxins occur frequently in our food and our homes. Moulds discharge spores into the air and can therefore spread easily.

**THEY CAN BE FOUND**
- on the internal walls of buildings, bathrooms, and in the different water appliances
- on cereals, especially wheat, rye and corn
- in whole wheat bread and bakery products
- in whole wheat cereal flakes, muesli and pasta
- in dried fruits
- in beer and coffee
- in walnuts, hazelnuts, pistachios and almonds

**THEIR EFFECTS ON HUMAN HEALTH**
- Mycotoxins can harm the liver and kidneys
- Some of them are carcinogenic
- They can cause mutations at the DNA
- Mould spores can cause allergies and in more serious cases asthma and respiratory infections
- They can damage the nerves
- They can disrupt the hormone system
- They can reduce the function of the immune system

**ADVICE ON HOW TO AVOID MOULDS AND MYCOTOXINS**
- Always buy your cereals from a reliable source!
- Don't consume more from a certain food than the daily recommendation! Try to not overeat from dried fruit and seeds. Don't provide too much whole wheat cereal flakes and bakery products to your children!
- Even if the mould stain is small, wrap the mouldy food and remove it from your home!
- Pay attention to the causes of mould at home (water damage, high humidity indoors). If there is mould at home, remove it as soon as possible with the help of an expert!

Certain species of mould are used by the food industry to produce fermented products. These are the “noble moulds” used to make certain cheese and salamis.