Food additives: curdlan (E 424)

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EU approves the use of curdlan (E 424) as a food additive in a wide range of food products from 8 November 2026

Commission Regulation (EU) 2026/2298 of 16 October 2026 amending Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the Annex to Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 as regards the use of curdlan

Update

The European Union (EU) has approved curdlan (E 424) as a gelling, firming, stabilising, and thickening agent for use in a wide range of foods. This approval follows a favourable safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority. The use of curdlan must comply with maximum levels, restrictions, and strict purity specifications depending on the food category.

What is changing?

The EU has authorised the use use of curdlan (E 424) as a food additive in the European Union. Curdlan can be used as a gelling agent, firming agent, stabiliser, and thickener in the food products listed in Table 1.

The technical specifications for curdlan (including description, purity, and microbiological criteria) are given in Regulation 2026/2298, Annex II.

The new Regulation updates two existing Regulations: 1333/2008 which adds curdlan to the EU list of authorised food additives and establishes its permitted uses and maximum levels; and 231/2012 which introduces technical specifications and purity requirements for curdlan.

Why?

This authorisation follows a safety assessment by the European Food Safety Authority, which concluded that curdlan does not raise safety concerns at the proposed uses and levels (EFSA 2024).

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Timeline

Curdlan (E 424) can be used in the products listed in Table 1 from **8 November 2026**.

Background

Curdlan is a polysaccharide produced by bacterial fermentation using *Rhizobium radiobacter* biovar 1 strain NTK-u. It can be used as a gelling agent, firming agent, stabiliser, and thickener to improve the texture, water retention, and heat stability of food.

This new Regulation updates Regulation 1333/2008 which:

- outlines the rules for assessment and approval of food additives within the EU –
  - list of approved food additives specifying which food additives may be used in various categories of food products under certain conditions (Annex II)
  - list of specific applications detailing which food additives can be used in the manufacture of other food additives, enzymes, and flavourings (Annex III).
- specifies the maximum amounts that can be used in food products, based on two main principles:
  - minimal necessary quantity: additives should be used in the smallest quantity needed to achieve their intended function, such as food preservation or flavour enhancement
  - safety considerations: the quantities used must ensure safety for all consumer groups and reflect the acceptable daily intake (ADI) levels, particularly for populations with potentially higher consumption.

For the most recently updated list of approved food additives and conditions of use, see Regulation 1333/2008: click on the most recent date under “All consolidated versions”.

For further information on the food categories in Regulation 1333/2008, Annex II, Part E, see European Union (2025).

The new Regulation also updates Regulation 231/2012 which gives the technical specifications and purity requirements for each food additive.

Resources

EFSA (2024) Safety evaluation of curdlan as a food additive. EFSA Journal, 22(9): e8985.

European Union (2025) Guidance document describing the food categories in Part E of Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on Food Additives

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Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 laying down specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008

Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 on food additives

Sources

Regulation (EU) 2026/2298 as regards the use of curdlan

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Tables & Figures

Table 1: Food categories in which curdlan (E 424) may be used, maximum permitted levels, and conditions of use

Food category	Food category number	Maximum level (mg/L or mg/kg as appropriate)	Conditions of use and restrictions*
Processed cheese	01.7.5	40,000	–
Other fat and oil emulsions including spreads and liquid emulsions	02.2.2	50,000	–
Edible ices	03	30,000	–
Dried fruit and vegetables	04.2.1	50,000	May not be used to produce dehydrated foods intended to rehydrate on ingestion
Fruit and vegetables in vinegar, oil, or brine	04.2.2	50,000	–
Canned or bottled fruit and vegetables	04.2.3	50,000	Only chestnuts in liquid
Fruit and vegetable preparations excluding compote	04.2.4.1	50,000	–
Other similar fruit or vegetable spreads	04.2.5.3	10,000	Maximum individually or in combination with E 400–404, E 406, E 407, E 410, E 412, E 415, E 418
Nut butters and nut spreads	04.2.5.4	50,000	–
Processed potato products	04.2.6	50,000	–
Cocoa and chocolate products (as covered by Directive 2000/36/EC)	05.1	30,000	Only energy-reduced products or products with no added sugar
Other confectionery including breath-freshening microsweets	05.2	50,000	May not be used in jelly mini-cups; may not be used to produce dehydrated foods intended to rehydrate on ingestion
Chewing gum	05.3	10,000	–
Decorations, coatings, and fillings (except fruit-based fillings covered by category 04.2.4)	05.4	5 000	–
Breakfast cereals	06.3	20,000	–

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Food category	Food category number	Maximum level (mg/L or mg/kg as appropriate)	Conditions of use and restrictions*
Dry pasta	06.4.2	20,000	Only gluten-free pasta (specially produced to reduce gluten content or substitute for gluten-containing ingredients) and pasta intended for hypoproteic diets
Potato gnocchi	06.4.4	20,000	Except fresh refrigerated potato gnocchi
Fillings of stuffed pasta (ravioli etc.)	06.4.5	20,000	–
Noodles	06.5	20,000	–
Batters	06.6	5 000	–
Bread and rolls	07.1	20,000	Except products in categories 07.1.1 and 07.1.2
Fine bakery wares	07.2	20,000	–
Meat preparations (as defined by Regulation (EC) No 853/2004)	08.2	20,000	Only heat-treated preparations in which ingredients have been injected; or preparations composed of meats that have been handled differently (minced, sliced, processed) and combined; excludes bifteki, soutzoukaki, kebap, gyros, souvlaki
Heat-treated meat products	08.3.2	20,000	Except goose livers: foie gras, foie gras entier, blocs de foie gras, libamáj, libamáj egészben, libamáj tömbben
Casings, coatings, and decorations for meat	08.3.3	20,000	–
Processed fish and fishery products including molluscs and crustaceans	09.2	30,000	–
Processed eggs and egg products	10.2	20,000	–
Mustard	12.4	30,000	–
Soups and broths	12.5	10,000	–

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Food category	Food category number	Maximum level (mg/L or mg/kg as appropriate)	Conditions of use and restrictions*
Sauces	12.6	30,000	–
Salads and savoury-based sandwich spreads	12.7	30,000	–
Protein products (excluding products covered by category 01.8)	12.9	80,000	–
Potato-, cereal-, flour-, or starch-based snacks	15.1	10,000	–
Desserts (excluding products covered by categories 01, 03, and 04)	16	30,000	–

*A dash (–) means that Regulation 2026/2298 does not specify an additional restriction for E 424 in that food category. The authorisation remains subject to the general provisions of EU food additives legislation.

Source: based on Regulation 2026/2298

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