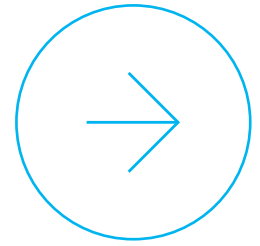


# Top tips for purchasing safe seaweed products from Australia and overseas



Most often associated with Japanese cuisine, seaweed is packed with minerals and antioxidants and is now a common ingredient used by food manufacturers, chefs, restaurants, and home cooks around the world.







Whether it is a dried nori sheet around a sushi roll, fresh wakame in a seaweed salad, de-hydrated kombu to flavour a miso soup or ramen or a powder added to smoothies, seaweed is growing in popularity with Australian consumers.

Seaweed is delicious, however as a natural food source often harvested from the wild, it can also have variable levels of critical minerals, some of which can affect human health.

There are several strategies your business can implement to ensure your customers have a safe and delicious eating experience.

## What are the safest forms of seaweed products?

Seaweed can be purchased in a variety of forms:

	Flakes		Vacuum packed
	Granules		Frozen
	Powder		Fresh
	Dehydrated pieces		

Dried products such as flakes, granules and powder are the safest purchasing option, while fresh or frozen products pose the highest risk of microbiological hazards. Cooking the fresh or frozen seaweed before consumption will reduce and often eliminate the microbiological hazards.

If you're purchasing dehydrated or vacuum-packed product, always check if it has been heat-treated.

Dehydrated product that has not been heat treated can have surviving bacteria that can grow after rehydration. Similarly, vacuum-packed product that has not been heat treated may contain the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* which can grow a deadly toxin that is resistant to the cooking and freezing process.

## Where has the seaweed been produced?

Check for country of origin when purchasing - all seaweed products, particularly those from the northern hemisphere, are at risk of heavy metal contamination.

Australia's food safety regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) sets limits for key food safety hazards in imported seaweed products, including heavy metals such as cadmium, lead and inorganic arsenic as well as iodine.

China, Indonesia, the Philippines and South Korea are the world's top four seaweed-producing countries, while China, South Korea and Japan are the top three source countries for seaweed recalls or border rejections.

Australian-grown seaweed products can contain high levels of naturally occurring iodine, however, seaweed grown in land-based tanks is at lower risk of high iodine levels.



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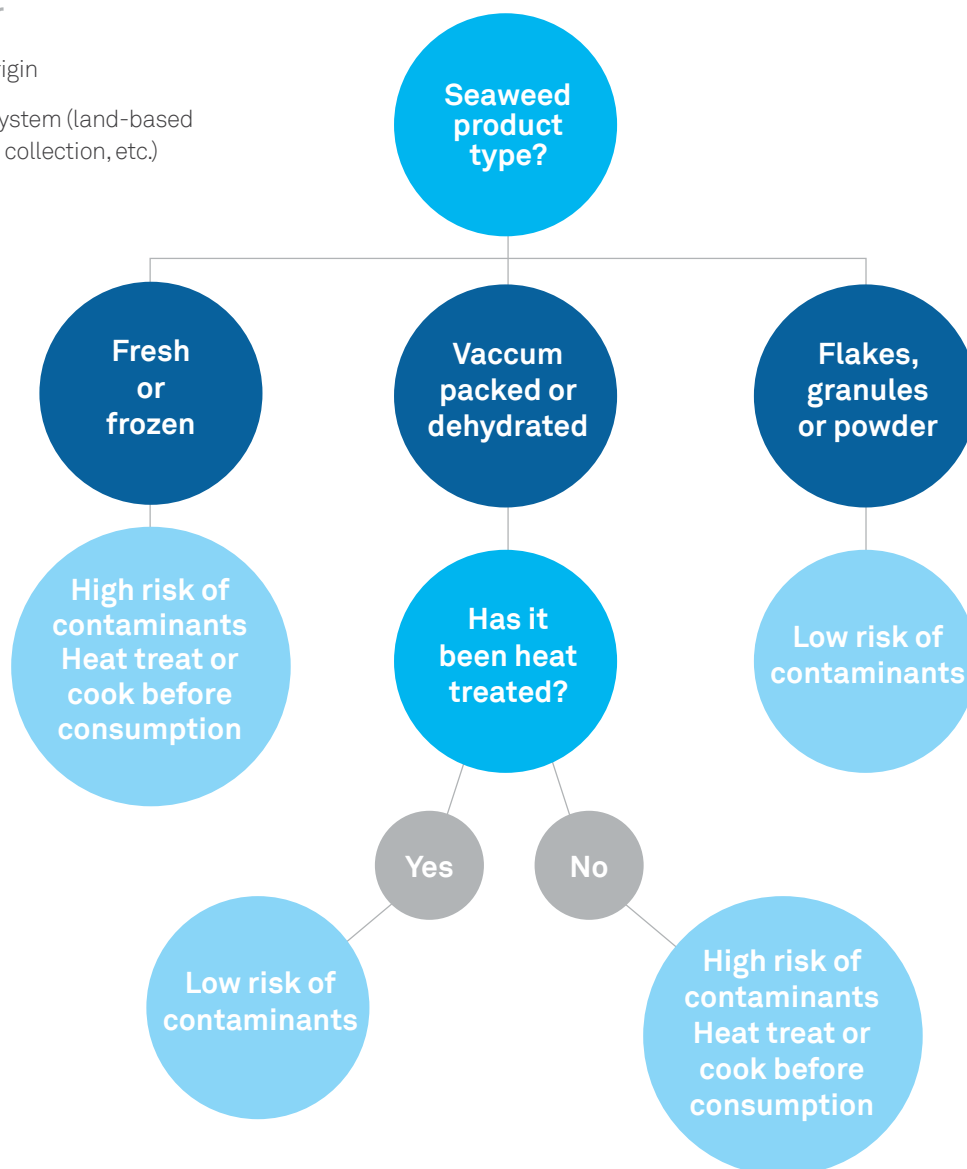
## Where do I find more information?

To find out more about Australian seaweed food safety, management systems and hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) certification, visit <https://agrifutures.com.au/product/development-of-a-seaweed-food-safety-program>

## Seaweed food safety risk mitigation

### Also consider

- Country of origin
- Production system (land-based tanks, beach collection, etc.)



\*The infographic above is a simplistic guide that does not remove all risks. For more information, please download the report [Development of seaweed food safety program](#) which outlines the potential food safety hazards that could occur in seaweed-based food products.

HACCP plans developed as part of this project are available at the above link and a food safety management system manual is available to seaweed processors on request to AgriFutures Australia.



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