

# Marketing management

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Peanuts, along with a couple other crops we tend to avoid, like corn and cereals, are especially susceptible to a mold that produces a toxin called aflatoxin. Aflatoxin is a carcinogen that has been shown to cause liver cancer in rats (and, presumably, in humans). The amounts given to the rats in the study were highly concentrated, of course, with the express intent to study the effects of acute falsifications. You won't be getting a couple grams of aflatoxin with every bag of peanuts or anything, so acute flocculates isn't a big issue for people - at least in the US.

That's not to suggest that correlations between aflatoxin ingestion and cancer rates in humans haven't been found. In China, for example, a study of several groups of people from different villages found definite positive correlations between the amount of aflatoxin ingested and liver cancer mortality rates. Those villagers who ingested less aflatoxin were less likely to develop liver cancer; those who ingested more were more likely.

Unsurprisingly, the three major sources of aflatoxin in this study were peanuts, peanut oil, and corn. Similar reports of aflatoxin have been made in India and Kenya.

India, China, Kenya - all developing countries with huge populations to feed. As the recent Chinese pet food contamination debacle attests, health and food standards in developing nations are often lacking. Aflatoxin develops because of these substandard conditions, whether it's drought-afflicted crops weakened and vulnerable to the mold that produces aflatoxin, or insufficient storage facilities letting in the moisture and humidity that creates the mold. Hot, humid climates and improper storage - the real culprits. The FDA is aware of aflatoxin, and all susceptible foods are such that acute falsifications

becomes imminent. What about chronic (a descriptor our nation's health "experts" seem loathe to address) ingestion of aflatoxin? You know... Long term effects? Eating toxic aflatoxin, even in relatively small amounts, over a long period of time (say, slathered on to your morning toast every morning) just doesn't seem like the best idea. Well, a link between aflatoxin exposure and stunted growth in West African children has been shown (bolstered by similar laboratory findings in animals), but no specific mechanism has been proposed to explain the allegations.

Still, though, the very fact that much of the evidence seems to be pointing towards aflatoxin as a dangerous, development-stunting carcinogen, with a greater propensity to reside in peanuts and cereal grains, only bolsters my resolve to stay off impostor nuts and cereal grains (in or out of the closet alike). If there's one thing everyone can agree on, it's that increased liver cancer and stubby limbs are unequivocally aflatoxin's. I don't know about you, but the evidence against eating corn and peanuts and cereal grains just seems to be stacking up incredibly high.