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Applications of Neutron Activation Analysis in Food Studies

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Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) is a sensitive technique for quantifying elemental concentrations in solid samples. It is a mature and well-understood method that has been in use for several decades across a range of disciplines. Today it is one of many techniques available to analysts for characterising the elemental makeup of solid samples, albeit with somewhat limited availability as a powerful neutron source, such as a nuclear research reactor, is a requirement. Partly but not entirely as a result of this, it is often overlooked in favour of more readily accessible methods, yet still holds some key advantages over other methods commonly used. This talk aims to cover the basic concepts of NAA and outline the advantages and disadvantages in the context of elemental analysis of food, while outlining the experience of the NAA capability at the Australian Nuclear Science & Technology Organisation (ANSTO).

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