Minimum a_w Requirements for Microorganism Growth

Microorganism	Minimum a_w for Growth
Most molds (e.g., *Aspergillus*)	0.75[1]
Most yeasts	0.88[2]
C. botulinum[3]	0.93
Staphylococcus aureus[4]	0.85
Salmonella	0.94
Listeria monocytogenes	0.92

[1]Some strains – 0.61
[2]Some strains – 0.62
[3]Proteolytic strains, 10% NaCl
[4]Minimum for toxin production is higher

Water Activity of Some Common Foods

Food	a_w
Perishable and canned foods (including meats, vegetables, fish and milk)	0.95-1.00
Liverwurst	0.96
Some cheese spreads	0.95
Some cheeses and cured meats	0.91-0.95
Chorizos	0.92
Many fermented sausages	0.87-0.91
Semi-moist pet food	0.83
Salami	0.82
Chocolate syrups	0.75-0.83
Jams	0.75-0.80
Peanut butter – 15% total moisture	0.70
Jerky	≤0.80