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Health Canada is Working With the Food Industry to Develop a Code of Practice to Minimize the Occurrence of Bisphenol A in Infant Formula

Background

On November 17, 2009 Health Canada's Food Directorate made a formal request to Canada's Food Industry members to provide an update on any reduction strategies that both food packaging manufacturers and infant formula manufacturers have undertaken to reduce levels of bisphenol A (BPA) in liquid infant formula. This request has been made in accordance with the current Government of Canada risk management commitments for BPA. In addition, Health Canada's Food Directorate has strongly recommended that industry should develop and implement identified reduction strategies to ensure that Canadian exposure to BPA from infant formula is kept as low as possible.

BPA was included in Batch 2 of the Challenge under the Chemicals Management Plan carried out by Health Canada and Environment Canada. On October 18, 2008, the Government of Canada released its final assessment report, including the Government's proposed risk management approach, to ensure that Canadian exposure to BPA is kept as low as possible, particularly for newborns and infants.

Health Canada's Food Directorate, in conjunction with the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) of the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA), last met with industry to work towards the development and implementation of a "Code of Practice" aimed at reducing levels of BPA in infant formula can linings following the ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) principle in January of this year¹.

What is Health Canada Doing?

The Bureau of Chemical Safety (BCS), part of Health Canada's Food Directorate, is responsible for ensuring that chemicals are not present in foods at levels that may cause adverse health effects. As part of its mandate, BCS is actively engaged in addressing several Government commitments to manage possible risks posed by BPA in foods. These commitments were first announced on April 18, 2008 and reiterated on October 18, 2008:

¹ January 30, 2009: Report on the Health Canada / US-FDA / and Industry BPA Value Chain Meeting.

- (1) Supporting industry in developing a "Code of Practice" to reduce levels of BPA in canned liquid infant formula
- (2) Facilitating the assessment of proposed industry alternatives to BPA for use in infant formula can coatings
- (3) Setting migration targets for BPA in infant formula

Currently, the Food Directorate is asking the food industry to provide an update on progress towards developing a Code of Practice for minimizing BPA in infant formula and/or whether other risk mitigation strategies have been investigated.

Next Steps

Health Canada will continue to work with the food industry to develop a "Code of Practice" aimed at reducing levels of BPA in canned infant formula to the lowest reasonably achievable levels.

Health Canada will facilitate the assessment of any proposed industry alternatives to BPA for use in infant formula can coatings

Health Canada's Food Directorate will continue to provide guidance to industry on performance criteria used for analytical methods designed to determine levels of BPA in infant formula.

For More Information

Health Canada's Information Website on Bisphenol A

<http://hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/packag-emball/bpa/index-eng.php>

Government of Canada Protects Families With Bisphenol A Regulations

<http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/challenge-defi/batch-lot-2/bisphenol-a/index-eng.php>

Questions and Answers for Action on Bisphenol A Under the Chemicals Management Plan

http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/fact-fait/bisphenol-a_qa-qr-eng.php

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