

EFSA

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news>

Revised safe intake for 3-MCPD in vegetable oils and food

EFSA's experts have used an updated scientific approach to reassess the possible long-term adverse effects of the food processing contaminant 3-MCPD on the kidney and male fertility.

Consumption levels of 3-MCPD in food are considered safe for most consumers but there is a potential health concern among high consumers in younger age groups. In the worst case scenario, infants receiving formula only may slightly exceed the safe level.

The chemical 3-monochloropropane diol (3-MCPD) and related substances called 3-MCPD esters are food processing contaminants found in some processed foods and vegetable oils, mainly palm oil. 3-MCPD and its esters are formed unintentionally in these foods, in particular during oil refining processes.

EFSA's expert panel on contaminants first assessed the potential risks of 3-MCPD in 2016 together with another food processing contaminant called glycidyl fatty acid esters (GE). EFSA concluded that GE are a concern for public health because they are genotoxic and carcinogenic, i.e. they can damage DNA and cause cancer.

The European Commission is finalising new EU legislation aimed at

reducing GE levels in vegetable oils and food.

The current update is for 3-MCPD and its esters only and EFSA's previous assessment of GE has not changed.

New uncertainty approach to make advice 'more transparent and robust'

EFSA has developed a harmonised approach to assessing and taking account of uncertainties in food safety, and animal and plant health. This approach will boost the transparency of the resulting scientific advice and make it more robust for decision-making.

The EFSA Scientific Committee guidance on uncertainty in scientific assessments offers a diverse toolbox of scientific methods and technical tools for uncertainty analysis. It is sufficiently flexible to be implemented in such diverse areas as plant pests, microbiological hazards and chemical substances.

Prof Tony Hardy, Chair of the Scientific Committee said: "Since 2016, we have tested, refined and tailored our new approach to uncertainty analysis, benefiting from open consultations with EFSA's partners and the wider public. Crucially, we learnt a great deal about how to apply the new approach by trialling it across all EFSA's scientific areas of activity.

The approach is described in two separate documents: a short

user-friendly guidance with practical instructions and tips, and a supporting scientific opinion with all the detailed scientific reasoning and methods.

The long-term goal is that the new guidance on uncertainty will be an integral step in all EFSA's scientific assessments.

Listeria infections increase in vulnerable groups

Listeria cases have increased among two groups of the population: people over 75 and women aged 25-44 (believed to be mainly pregnancy-related). This is one of the main conclusions of an EFSA scientific opinion on Listeria monocytogenes and risks to public health from consumption of contaminated ready-to-eat food. The opinion covers the period 2008-2015.

Experts began work on the scientific opinion after the 2015 EU summary report on foodborne zoonotic diseases identified an increasing trend of listeriosis over the period 2009-2013.

EFSA experts concluded that the higher incidence of listeriosis among the elderly was likely linked to the increased proportion of people aged over 45 with underlying health conditions, such as cancer and diabetes.

The rise in consumption of ready-to-eat foods and an improved monitoring system in some Member States may

also have contributed to this trend.

Most people get infected through the consumption of ready-to-eat foods such as smoked and cured fish, heat treated meat and soft and semi-soft cheese. However, other foods – such as prepared salads – can also lead to infections.

Experts estimated that one third of cases of listeriosis are due to growth of *Listeria monocytogenes* in food prepared and stored at home in the refrigerator. This highlights the importance of following good hygiene practices, such as respecting recommended storage temperatures and times. International organisations such as the World Health Organization advise that foods should be refrigerated below 5°C.

Food Safety News

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/>

CEO says firm may have sold contaminated baby milk for years

Lactalis, one of the world's largest dairy groups, may have been producing Salmonella-contaminated baby milk for more than a decade, its CEO was quoted as saying this week.

The French company has recalled 12 million cans of milk in France and several other countries since babies got sick last year after drinking milk produced at a Lactalis factory in Craon in western France.

Salmonella infections can be life-threatening, particularly for young children. On Thursday, Reuters reported that Lactalis CEO Emmanuel Besnier said the growing food safety crisis will likely cost the company hundreds of millions of euros.

The same strain of Salmonella was responsible for some infections in 2005, Besnier told French newspaper Les Echos, adding it was possible the factory was the source for those cases, and others since.

In 2005, the factory in Craon was owned by Celia, a company taken over by Lactalis in 2006.

"It cannot be excluded that babies have consumed infected

milk over this period," Besnier said.

The Institut Pasteur, which monitors microorganisms and diseases, said more than 200 babies in France had been infected with Salmonella Agona since 2005, including 38 between mid-August and December 2016. There were 25 confirmed illnesses between 2006 and 2017 and 141 in 2005, Reuters reported.

French health authorities have said 36 of the 38 cases in 2016 were clearly linked to Lactalis milk, as was one in Spain and a suspected one in Greece. A group representing victims' families says there were at least 10 more cases.

The privately owned company exports its

products to dozens of countries in Europe, Africa and Asia. It also sells in the United States, but none of the recalled baby milk has been traced to U.S. distributors so far.

Last month, French authorities searched five Lactalis sites, including the Craon plant. Besnier said a facility at that plant has been closed and will stay that way.

Canada recalls more frozen coconut linked to U.S. outbreak

A third recall is underway in Canada for the same brand of frozen, shredded coconut that U.S. officials say is linked to a multi-state Salmonella outbreak that has sick-

ened people on both sides of the border.

Posted Monday, the third recall notice from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency named Coconut Tree brand frozen coconut. It has the same lot number as the Coconut Tree brand coconut in the second recall, but it has different date codes. Both the second and third recalls indicate Thai Indochine Trading Inc. is the recalling firm.

The first Canadian recall of the Coconut Tree branded product, on Jan. 24, also included Green Field and Captain's Choice brands. It did not specify an importer or distributor, merely stating "industry" had initiated the recalls.

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