



Foods

Why am I being warned about potential exposure to chemicals in certain foods?



- Certain foods contain chemicals that are on the [Proposition 65](#) list because they can cause cancer and/or birth defects or other reproductive harm.
- Proposition 65 requires businesses to determine if they must provide a warning about exposures to [listed chemicals](#).

Some foods contain chemicals on the Proposition 65 list.

Food is essential to life and good health. However, many foods contain substances, such as saturated fats, salt and sugar, that should be consumed in moderation. Similarly, some foods contain Proposition 65 chemicals. This does not mean that these foods should never be eaten. But interested consumers can decide what and how often to eat certain foods if they wish to reduce their exposure to these chemicals.

The Proposition 65 listed chemicals commonly found in such foods are:

- [Acrylamide](#) is formed mostly on the surface of plant-based foods when they are browned during frying, roasting, grilling, or baking. In general, the browner the surface, the higher the level of acrylamide.
 - ▶ Acrylamide levels can vary among different kinds of foods and even among different brands of the same kind of food. Many foods have low levels of acrylamide that do not pose a significant cancer risk and do not require a warning. A warning for acrylamide on a food product suggests that regular consumption of the food over time can pose a greater cancer risk than consumption of foods with lower acrylamide levels.
- [Arsenic \(Inorganic\)](#) is a naturally occurring chemical element in the Earth's crust.
 - ▶ Some plant crops, such as [rice](#), can absorb arsenic. When grown in soil with elevated arsenic levels, the amount of arsenic in rice can be elevated.
 - ▶ Some herbal medicines from India and China may contain arsenic.
 - ▶ Some edible seaweed (especially hijiki, a short, black noodle-like seaweed) can absorb arsenic from water.
- [Bisphenol A \(BPA\)](#) This chemical is used in some coatings for cans, jar lids, and bottle caps. It is also used in some polycarbonate plastic bottles and other food-contact items. However, the use of BPA in these items is decreasing.
 - ▶ BPA can leach into food or beverages from BPA-based linings in metal food and drink cans, jar lids, and bottle caps.
- [Cadmium](#) is a metal found in certain fish, shellfish, and organ meats. Some leafy vegetables, like spinach grown in cadmium-rich soils, take up cadmium.

- [DEHP](#) is a type of phthalate added to many plastics to make them flexible, and can be gradually released into certain foods and beverages from plastic food packaging.
- [Lead](#) is a metal found in some dietary supplements, certain balsamic vinegars, some imported spices such as turmeric. In the past, some imported candies such as some products containing chili and tamarind, have had significant amounts of lead.
- [Mercury](#) is a metal that can accumulate in certain types of [fish and seafood](#).
 - ▶ Fish that tend to have the highest levels of mercury include: King mackerel, shark, tilefish (from the Gulf of Mexico), swordfish, marlin, bigeye tuna, bluefin tuna, and orange roughy.
 - ▶ Some dietary supplements and traditional medicines may contain mercury.

How can I reduce my potential exposure to Proposition 65 listed chemicals in certain foods?

- ✓ Eat more fresh foods, rather than processed or canned food products.
- ✓ Limit your consumption of heavily fried and grilled foods. Fry foods at temperatures of 170 degrees Celsius or less, and in particular cook potato strips such as French fries to a golden yellow rather than a golden brown color. This will reduce the formation of acrylamide.
- ✓ Include alternatives to rice-based foods in your infant's diet.
- ✗ Avoid using polycarbonate plastic containers and tableware for hot food or drinks, and avoid microwaving foods in polycarbonate plastic containers.
- ✓ Store food and liquids in glass or stainless steel rather than plastic containers.
- ✓ Choose fish that are lower in mercury, such as salmon, trout, tilapia, cod, sole, sardines, shrimp, oysters, and other shellfish.
- ✓ If you are pregnant, be especially careful not to consume more than the [recommended daily amount of fish that may contain mercury](#).
- ✓ When consuming fish caught from California water bodies and coastal areas, follow [OEHHA sport-fish advisories and safe eating guidelines](#).
- ✓ Check federal and state web sites that monitor levels of lead in [imported candies](#) and [spices](#).
- ✓ Eat a well-balanced diet with adequate calcium, iron and vitamin C, which can help reduce the amount of lead that your body absorbs.
- ✓ Limit consumption of shellfish and certain animal organ meats (liver and kidney) to moderate amounts.

For more information:**General Fact Sheets and Resources**

- US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
National Institute of Health, National Cancer Institute (NIH-NCI)
 - ▶ Acrylamide in Food and Cancer Risk
<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/diet/acrylamide-fact-sheet#q6>
- US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - ▶ 2017 EPA-FDA Advice about Eating Fish and Shellfish
<https://www.epa.gov/fish-tech/2017-epa-fda-advice-about-eating-fish-and-shellfish>
- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - ▶ Analytical Results from Inorganic Arsenic in Rice and Rice Products Sampling
<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/.../UCM352467.pdf>
 - ▶ For Consumers: Seven Things Pregnant Women and Parents Need To Know About Arsenic In Rice and Rice Cereal
<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm493677.htm>
 - ▶ Questions and Answers on Lead in Foods
<https://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/Metals/ucm557424.htm>
 - ▶ Use Caution with Ayurvedic Medicines
<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm050798.htm>
 - ▶ Update: Gel Spice, Inc. Issues Expanded Recall of Ground Turmeric Powder Due
<https://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm515328.htm>
 - ▶ FDA Recalls on Spices
https://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm532166.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
 - ▶ Import Alert 28-13
https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cms_ia/importalert_1143.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - ▶ Candy
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/candy.htm>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
 - ▶ Lead in Candy Program
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/LeadInCandy.aspx>
 - ▶ Photos of Candies Found to Contain lead Levels in Excess of 0.10 ppm (2013)
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/LeadInCandy/AlphabeticalListing.pdf>

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Acrylamide
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/acrylamide>
 - ▶ Arsenic (Inorganic)
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/arsenic-inorganic>
 - ▶ Bisphenol A (BPA)
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/bisphenol-bpa>
 - ▶ Cadmium and Cadmium Compounds
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/cadmium-and-cadmium-compounds>
 - ▶ Di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP)
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/di2-ethylhexylphthalate-dehp>
 - ▶ Foods and Beverages at Restaurants and Other Food Facilities
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/foods-and-beverages-restaurants-and-other-food-facilities>
 - ▶ Lead and Lead Compounds
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/lead-and-lead-compounds>
 - ▶ Mercury and Mercury Compounds
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/mercury-and-mercury-compounds>
 - Mercury in Fish
<https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/faqs/hgfactsnontechnical.pdf>
 - Good Catch California: Advice on Healthy Fish Consumption
<https://oehha.ca.gov/fish>
 - Advice for Fish You Buy from Stores and Restaurants
<https://oehha.ca.gov/fish/advice-fish-you-buy-stores-and-restaurants>

Proposition 65

- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA)
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
 - ▶ Proposition 65: Background
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/faq>
 - ▶ Proposition 65: The Chemical List
<https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals>