



FDA Update, Nutrition, Toxicology, News Articles

FDA working to reduce exposure to toxic elements in foods, other products

by from the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Division of Pediatric and Maternal Health, and Office of Pediatric Therapeutics

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition established the Toxic Elements Working Group in 2017 to identify FDA priorities aimed at reducing exposure to toxic elements in foods, foodwares, cosmetics and dietary products. Using a systematic, risk-based approach, the work group targeted the evaluation of arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury as having the greatest potential to reduce exposure from foods and limiting the associated health risks, especially for infants and children.

Exposures come from many different products containing low levels of these elements. The work group is reviewing data from multiple sources, including the FDA's Total Diet Study, on levels of contaminants in foods and other products. These data are being used to assess exposures to these contaminants in different population groups.

Recently, the **FDA shared** its decision and rationale for replacing the provisional total tolerable daily intakes for lead from food with interim reference levels (IRLs) and decreasing the upper limits of those levels by 50%. In determining the new IRLs for children and adults, the FDA considered the amount of a food a person would need to consume daily, as well as other factors, that could result in blood lead levels of 5 µg per deciliter, the level at which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends clinical monitoring for children.

The FDA is committed to transparency in decision-making related to its efforts to reduce exposure to toxic elements in consumer products. The FDA will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout this process to ensure the strategy leads to meaningful and feasible solutions.

Resources

[Q&A on what the FDA is doing to protect consumers from toxic metals in foods](#)

[Information on lead in food, foodwares and dietary supplements](#)

[FDA Total Diet Study](#)

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