

# More alarmist junk on arsenic this time, rice

By ACSH Staff — September 20, 2012

Almost exactly one year ago, television s Dr. Oz scared the American public by [warning parents](#) [1] that the apple juice they were giving their children could be toxic. The culprit? Arsenic.

So it seemed like déjà vu when, just yesterday, Consumer Reports [set off alarm bells](#) [2] about the dangerous levels of arsenic we re consuming this time, in rice. After sampling 60 different rice products, including cold breakfast cereals, infant rice cereal, rice milk, and brown rice, the consumer-oriented group found that most contained some amount of inorganic arsenic, which is considered a human carcinogen but only at chronic high-dose exposure.

Based on their findings, Consumer Reports is now recommending limited intake of rice products: Babies are to have no more than one serving of infant rice cereal per day, and adults should stop at two servings of rice per week.

The group is also calling on regulators to ban pesticides and arsenic-containing drugs used in livestock and crop production, which they say contributes to the elevated levels of the element found in foods. Currently, the federal limit for arsenic in drinking water is set at 10 parts per billion (ppb), equivalent to one microgram (one millionth of a gram) dissolved in one liter of water.

On the heels of the Consumer Reports announcement, the FDA announced yesterday that it will be conducting its own research on the matter, which is slated to be completed by the end of the year. But much as the FDA took Dr. Oz to task last year, pointing out that his claims were flawed and misleading, we hope the agency takes the same stance with the latest Consumer Reports study.

As ACSH has always tried to make clear, food naturally contains a myriad of chemicals traditionally thought of as carcinogens (see our [Holiday Dinner Menu](#) [3]). These may be harmful at high doses, yet are perfectly safe when consumed at low levels just like those at which arsenic occurs in rice.

Chronically elevated levels of arsenic in water supplies, like those once found in Taiwan or Bangladesh, often exceeded 100 ppb, says ACSH s Dr. Gilbert Ross. And when such populations ingest this water year after year, there has been evidence to demonstrate that it may cause skin rash, skin cancer, hypertension, and rarely lung cancer. But the levels of arsenic found in rice are many magnitudes lower and do not pose any health threat to people of any age or gestational status.

**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2012/09/20/more-alarmist-junk-on-arsenic-this-time-rice>

**Links**

[1] <http://www.acsh.org/pay-no-attention-to-the-man-behind-the-curtain/>

[2] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/19/us-usa-rice-arsenic-idUSBRE88I0RR20120919>

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/publications/acsh-holiday-dinner-menu/>