

FROOT LOOPS CONTAMINATED WITH 2-METHYLNAPHTHALENE CHEMICAL

As cereal lovers sat down to enjoy their bowls of Froot Loops, Honey Smacks, Apple Jacks and Corn Pops, they had no idea they were about to eat a petrochemical called 2-methylnaphtalene. This chemical is a “constituent of petroleum, automobile exhaust, ...waste water from coal gasification, coke and shale oil production...” and other similarly bizarre sources. So what was 2-methylnaphtalene doing in boxes of Kellogg cereals?

It turns out this chemical was most likely released from the wax paper cereal liners that hold the cereal. This could have been due to the heating of the wax paper when it is sealed. This causes the off-gassing of chemicals which can then be absorbed by the cereal itself.

The effect was so bad that the FDA received dozens of complaints from consumers who could taste and smell the chemical. Some said the cereal made them feel ill.

Kellogg, of course, immediately recalled 28 million boxes of its cereals, and the FDA began an investigation. The investigation essentially consisted of the FDA asking Kellogg what went wrong, and Kellogg explained that the 2-methylnaphtalene accidentally got into the cereals from the liners, and the FDA said “Okay” and concluded its investigation.

What is missing from the investigation? The question of how toxic 2-methylnaphtalene really is to the human body.

You see, nobody knows the answer to that question. Not Kellogg, and not the FDA. 2-methylnaphtalene was one of the 65,000 or so chemicals grandfathered in as “assumed to be safe” under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 – which we now know to be a scientific whitewash. Just because a chemical is declared to be safe by a regulation doesn't alter the laws of chemistry.

You see, these chemicals have never been tested for human safety. So when consumers are exposed to them doctors aren't even sure how to treat them. The FDA has no clue what the chemical does either. And just to avoid anyone asking the really tough questions, the FDA's own web page describing this “investigation” doesn't even mention the chemical. The website states: *“It appears that the cereals were packaged in cereal boxes with waxed paper liners that imparted the bad taste and the odors to the food. The wax paper liners appear to be the source of the problem”*

The FDA did nothing to fine Kellogg over this mass exposure of the American public to the 2-methylnaphtalene, it basically declared the whole issue to be a non-issue and let Kellogg go right back to business packaging its cereals in wax paper liners again.

2-methylnaphtalene is a petroleum chemical. The Scorecard.org website categorizes it as a “respiratory toxicant”, a term it further defines with this general description: *“Exposure to chemical substances can cause adverse effects on the respiratory system, which consists of the nasal passages, pharynx, trachea, bronchi and the lungs. Respiratory toxicity can include a variety of acute and chronic pulmonary conditions, including local irritation, bronchitis, pulmonary edema, emphysema and cancer”*.

Interestingly, 2-methylnaphtalene isn't the only petrochemical-derived substance found in

Froot Loops. The cereal is also made with **artificial colors** which are derived from petrochemicals.

Is it safe to eat cereals packaged in wax liners? What about cereals in plastic bags? Virtually all food packaging materials have some sort of health risk, from the aluminum used in soda cans to the plastic used in deli meats. (The best material of all is, of course, glass. Glass is perfectly safe for food contact and it leaches nothing into your food.)

Nearly all foods purchased in grocery stores are contaminated with multiple chemicals. Hence the reason for buying food from farmers markets and food co-ops. The basic rule of thumb for food safety is that **anything in a box or plastic package might pose some risk of chemical contamination**, even though that risk may be miniscule in most products. This risk extends, by the way, to super-foods and nutritional supplements packaged in plastic. They aren't immune to the laws of chemistry, although it could be argued that people consuming super-foods have better immune defenses against chemical contaminants.

Most chemical contamination of foods, by the way, goes entirely unnoticed by consumers. People are eating chemical contaminants right now, every single day, that are far more dangerous than the levels of 2-methylnaphtalene found in Froot Loops. Just the sodium nitrite found in hot dogs is a lot more dangerous to human health. And let's not talk about Aspartame, MSG and partially hydrogenated oils...

As you well know, here at Dinkelmann Health Center we encourage our patients to eat fresh foods as much as possible. When you buy broccoli, spinach, or whatever other fresh, green food, you know what you are getting. There is no ingredient list to decipher, (the obvious chemical additives most of us don't know) and if you carefully wash your produce before using it, you get rid of the unknown pesticides and other chemicals that may be on it, if you are not using organic produce..