



Triclosan

Triclosan is a chemical with antibacterial properties. For more than 30 years, it has been used in consumer products such as detergents, soaps, skin cleansers, deodorants, lotions, creams, toothpastes, and dishwashing liquids. Triclosan can be added to other materials, such as textiles, to make them resistant to bacterial growth.

How People Are Exposed to Triclosan

People may be exposed to triclosan when they use consumer products containing triclosan. When using these products, a person can absorb small amounts of triclosan through the skin or the mouth.

How Triclosan Affects People's Health

The human health effects from exposure to low environmental levels of triclosan are unknown. Skin products containing triclosan rarely have caused irritation. More research is needed to assess the human health effects of exposure to triclosan.

Levels of Triclosan in the U.S. Population

In the *Fourth National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals (Fourth Report)*, CDC scientists measured triclosan in the urine of 2,517 participants aged six years and older who took part in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) during 2003–2004. By measuring triclosan in urine, scientists can estimate the amount of triclosan that has entered people's bodies.

Triclosan was detected in the urine of nearly 75% of the people tested.

Finding measurable amounts of triclosan in urine does not mean that the levels of triclosan cause an adverse health effect. Biomonitoring studies on levels of triclosan provide physicians and public health officials with reference values so that they can determine whether people have been exposed to higher levels of triclosan than are found in the general population. Biomonitoring data can also help health scientists plan and conduct research on exposure and health effects.

For More Information

- Environmental Protection Agency
Re-registration Eligibility Decision and Risk Assessment for the Pesticidal Uses of Triclosan
http://www.epa.gov/oppsrrd1/REDs/factsheets/triclosan_fs.htm

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations.