



## **FDA NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release:** September 19, 2012

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**Consumer Inquiries:** 888-INFO-FDA

**FDA releases preliminary data on arsenic levels in rice and rice products**

*Full data collection to be complete by end of 2012, agency prioritizes further assessment to provide scientific basis for additional recommendations*

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As part of an ongoing and proactive effort to monitor food safety and address contaminants in food, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration today released preliminary data on arsenic levels in certain rice and rice products. The data are part of a larger FDA data collection and analysis about arsenic levels in rice and is based on the first set of approximately 200 samples of rice and rice products collected in the U.S. marketplace.

The FDA is in the process of collecting and analyzing a total of approximately 1,200 samples to examine the issue thoroughly. This data collection will be completed by the end of 2012. Once the data collection is completed, FDA will analyze these results and determine whether or not to issue additional recommendations.

Based on the currently available data and scientific literature the FDA does not have an adequate scientific basis to recommend changes by consumers regarding their consumption of rice and rice products.

“We understand that consumers are concerned about this matter. That’s why the FDA has prioritized analyzing arsenic levels in rice. The FDA is committed to ensuring that we understand the extent to which substances such as arsenic are present in our foods, what risks they may pose, whether these risks can be minimized, and to sharing what we know,” said FDA Commissioner Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D. “Our advice right now is that consumers should continue to eat a

balanced diet that includes a wide variety of grains – not only for good nutrition but also to minimize any potential consequences from consuming any one particular food.”

There are two types of arsenic compounds found in water, food, air, and soil: organic and inorganic. Together, the two types are referred to as total arsenic.

The new data show how much inorganic arsenic the FDA found in its initial samples, which include various brands of rice (non-Basmati), Basmati rice, brown rice, rice cereals (puffed, non-puffed, hot cereal, and infant cereals), rice cakes, and rice milk.

The FDA’s analysis of these initial samples found average levels of inorganic arsenic for the various rice and rice products of 3.5 to 6.7 micrograms of inorganic arsenic per serving. Serving sizes varied depending on the rice product (for example, one serving of non-Basmati rice was equal to one cup cooked). A [summary](#) of the initial 200 sample findings can be found at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

While the FDA data is consistent with results that *Consumer Reports* published today, the initial data collection is a first step in the agency’s ongoing more thorough data analysis. There are many different types of rice and rice products that are grown in different areas and under different conditions. Further analysis is needed to assess how these variations may affect the results.

“It is critical to not get ahead of the science,” said FDA Deputy Commissioner for Foods Michael Taylor. “The FDA’s ongoing data collection and other assessments will give us a solid scientific basis for determining what action levels and/or other steps are needed to reduce exposure to arsenic in rice and rice products.”

For more information:

[Arsenic: Questions and Answers](#)

[FDA Arsenic Data Analysis](#)

[Consumer Update: FDA Looks for Answers on Arsenic in Rice](#)

The FDA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, protects the public health by assuring the safety, effectiveness, and security of human and veterinary drugs, vaccines and other biological products for human use, and medical devices. The agency also is responsible for the safety and security of our nation’s food supply, cosmetics, dietary supplements, products that give off electronic radiation, and for regulating tobacco products.

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