

Infant Formula and Melamine

Lyle Loughry, December 2008

A week ago, the FDA "uncovered" disturbing questions about the safety of two top-selling brands of infant formula made by Nestle and Enfamil. They found harmful chemicals in these brands, but they did not rush to warn parents that their infant formula could be tainted, or order a recall, as was suggested by members of Congress? They didn't even publish their findings! All the FDA did was to call to warn Nestle and Enfamil, and even that would probably not have happened had the Associated Press not filed a Freedom of Information Act request, demanding the results from the FDA tests, and revealed the results.

Two months earlier, in September 2008, thousands of children in China began getting sick and several small children tragically died because of a chemical called melamine found in cans of infant formula. Melamine is a toxic chemical used to make a variety of plastic products, from cooking utensils to formica countertops. It's known to cause kidney damage when ingested. At that time, the FDA began testing infant formula made in the U.S. for melamine and a related chemical called *cyanuric acid*.

The FDA tested **87 different samples** of infant formula, and found 0.137 ppm (part per million) and 0.140 ppm of melamine in two cans, respectively, of Nestlé's Good Start Supreme Infant Formula with Iron. They also found 0.247ppm, 0.245ppm, 0.249 ppm of cyanuric acid in three cans, respectively, of Enfamil's Lipil with Iron.

On October 3rd, the FDA expressed zero tolerance on melamine in infant formula, and they refused to go on record with an 'acceptable' or 'safe' level of melamine, because so little is known about how the chemical affects infants. But **on Friday, November 28, the FDA completely changed their minds**, and announced that they were confident that infant formula containing up to **1 part per million** of melamine 'does not pose public health concerns,' The 1 part per million just happens to be the same standard set by public officials in China where this whole mess started! Who in their right mind would use China's standards as their own benchmark? The 1 part per million is still **20 times higher** than limits placed on infant formula in more conservative countries like Taiwan.

How did they come up with that figure? Do they have new research showing how young babies metabolize these harmful chemicals? Did they undertake a massive clinical trial testing the safety of this chemical over 20 to 30 years? **NO!**

The bottom line about *melamine* and even *cyanuric acid* is that It doesn't belong in infant formula, no matter how small the amount and no matter how much the FDA tries to assure us it's safe in small amounts. Sadly, some experts estimate that up to 90 percent of the infant formula on the market could contain what the FDA calls 'trace' levels of this toxic chemical.

Remember also, the FDA would never have made any of this information available to the public, if they had a choice. When the AP leaked the report, the FDA's first instinct wasn't to protect the infants at risk or warn the parents, but to call the CEOs of Nestle and Enfamil to warn them of the leak!

This information needs to be shared with anyone else who may be concerned with this dangerous issue. It's pretty well accepted that breast-feeding is always the best option for babies, but if that's not an option, choose your infant formula with extreme care. Take a look at the FDA tested formulas. Here's the link to their findings: [**http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/melamine/testresults.html**](http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/melamine/testresults.html)