News Coverage of Food Risk

Daily Mail
Could your fridge KILL YOU?

NEW YORK POST
ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES
Disease fears spur crisis for burger lovers

TIME
Is Anything Safe
How two tainted grapes triggered a panic about what we eat
News Coverage of Food Risk

Caramel color: The health risk that may be in your soda

It’s the most common coloring in foods and drinks—and it can contain a potential carcinogen. Here’s what Consumer Reports found when it tested soft drinks that have caramel color.

Last updated: February 10, 2014 09:45 AM

Is '4-MEI' in Your Soda? (And Why Should You Care?)
News Coverage of RISK

CALVIN AND HOBBES by Bill Watterson

HI MOM! I'M MAKING MY OWN NEWSPAPER TO REPORT THE EVENTS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD.

THAT'S NICE.

NOW I'M LOOKING FOR A PAGE ONE LEAD STORY. CAN I INTERVIEW YOU?

SURE.

OK, WHAT ARE YOU CUTTING UP THERE FOR DINNER?

FISH.

KNIFE WIELDING MOTHER HACKS ICHTHYOID! GRIM MELEE IS EVENING RITUAL! SUBURBAN FAMILY DEVOURS VICTIM!

OUT OF THE KITCHEN! OUT! OUT!
News Coverage of RISK

NON SEQUITUR by Wiley

DON'T WORRY, DEAR... IT'S JUST THE MEDIA TRYING TO SCARE US AGAIN
“Despite your best efforts, you will eventually succumb to the hysteria generated by the media.”
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

Human-made risks scare us more than natural risks
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

A risk that’s imposed on us feels scarier than the same risk if we engage in it voluntarily.
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

A risk from a source we don’t trust, or overseen by regulators we don’t trust, scares us more.
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

A risk to kids scares us more than a risk to adults
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

A risk with little or no direct benefit scares us more than a risk that also comes with benefits.
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

Does Sugar Cause Cancer?

A risk that threatens high pain and suffering scares us more than a risk the causes more benign effects

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CANCER WITH ORGANIC FOOD
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, and identify a “better” story

We worry more about risks if we are uncertain because
1. we can’t detect it
2. we don’t understand it,
3. the scientific answers aren’t all in
Psychological factors that make a risk scarier, WILL BE PLAYED UP IN THE NEWS

HUMAN-MADE
IMPOSED
LEVEL OF TRUST
RISKS TO KIDS
RISKS VS. BENEFITS
DEGREE OF PAIN AND SUFFERING (“DREAD”)
UNCERTAINTY
Chemical additive found in Lake Mich.

Study fuels worry on PBDE effects

By John Heilprin
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Concentrations of a flame retardant banned by many European countries have been found in Lake Michigan and are increasing, adding to concern over previous findings that the chemicals were showing up in supermarket foods and in women’s breast milk.

In the latest study, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, University of Wisconsin scientists found PBDEs, or polybrominated diphenyl ethers, in sediment hundreds of feet down in Lake Michigan.

Fish and other animals absorb chemicals and pollutants through the environment, storing them in fat that people then eat. Studies in rats and mice suggest high levels can cause liver and thyroid damage, NOAA said.

“They’re really showing up all over the world,” Bill Sonzogni, a University of Wisconsin professor, said yesterday. “And the Great Lakes, because of the food chain for bio-concentrating contaminants, has sometimes served as a sentinel for other parts of the world.”

The three-year study found PBDEs of up to one part per billion in the lake sediment — the equivalent of one drop of water in a 10,000-gallon swimming pool. By dating the samples of PBDEs, Sonzogni and scientist Jon Manchester also found that the concentrations were increasing, and that they mirror levels of PBDEs and other flame retardants used since the 1970s.

How PBDEs and other chemicals get into the lake is still not entirely clear, but the air is thought to be the mostly likely way.

PBDEs are added to plastics used in computers, televisions, furniture, and carpets.

No direct correlation has been shown between PBDEs and specific diseases or developmental impairment, and the government has not set any level of use that is considered safe in food.
Chemical additive found in Lake Mich.

Study fuels worry on PBDE effects

By John Heilprin
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Concentrations of a flame retardant banned by many European countries have been found in Lake Michigan and are increasing, adding to concern over previous findings that the chemicals were showing up in supermarket foods and in women's breast milk.

In the latest study, sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, University of Wisconsin scientists found PBDEs, or polybrominated diphenyl ethers, in sediment hundreds of feet down in Lake Michigan.

Fish and other animals absorb chemicals and pollutants through the environment, storing them in fat that people then eat. Studies in rats and mice suggest high levels can cause liver and thyroid damage, NOAA said.

“They're really showing up all over the world,” Bill Sonzogni, a University of Wisconsin professor, said yesterday. "And the Great Lakes, because of the food chain for bio-concentrating contaminants, has sometimes served as a sentinel for other parts of the world.”

The three-year study found PBDEs of up to one part per billion in the lake sediment — the equivalent of one drop of water in a 10,000-gallon swimming pool. By dating the samples of PBDEs, Sonzogni and scientist Jon Manchester also found that the concentrations were increasing, and that they mirror levels of PBDEs and other flame retardants used since the 1970s.

How PBDEs and other chemicals get into the lake is still not entirely clear, but the air is thought to be the mostly likely way.

PBDEs are added to plastics used in computers, televisions, furniture, and carpets.

No direct correlation has been shown between PBDEs and specific diseases or developmental impairment, and the government has not set any level of use that is considered safe in food.
Baby food packaging prompts cancer fears

But risk low, says European agency

By Emma Ross
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Europe’s food safety agency recommended yesterday that baby food manufacturers change the lids on their jars as soon as possible because of cancer concerns over a chemical found in some food packed in bottles and jars.

However, the European Food Safety Authority said there was no need for parents to stop using infant food because any cancer risk was extremely low and the jars have an excellent safety record for germs and other contaminants.

The chemical, semicarbazide, has been found in very small quantities in certain foods packaged in jars with metal lids incorporating plastic vacuum seals, a type of packaging used worldwide for more than 20 years.

An expert panel.

“Nevertheless,” the agency said in a statement, “experts believe it would be prudent to reduce the presence of semicarbazide in baby foods as swiftly as technological progress allows.”

The agency also recommended the industry change the lids for other products after baby foods have been tackled.

Besides baby food, bottled foods found to have traces of semicarbazide included fruit juices, jams, sterilized vegetables, pickles, mayonnaise, mustard, sauces, and ketchup. However, baby food had by far the strongest concentrations, probably because the contact between the food and the seal is more significant — the jars are small, but the cap still has to be big enough to fit a spoon in.

The Food and Drink Federation, a London-based European industry organization, said that, as a precaution, an industry task force is now working with the authorities to eliminate semicarba-
Baby food packaging prompts cancer fears

But risk low, says European agency

By Emma Ross
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON — Europe's food safety agency recommended yesterday that baby food manufacturers change the lids on their jars as soon as possible because of cancer concerns over a chemical found in some food packed in bottles and jars.

However, the European Food Safety Authority said there was no need for parents to stop using infant food because any cancer risk was extremely low and the jars have an excellent safety record for germs and other contaminants.

The chemical, semicarbazide, has been found in very small quantities in certain foods packaged in jars with metal lids incorporating plastic vacuum seals, a type of packaging used worldwide.

“Nevertheless,” the agency said in a statement, “experts believe it would be prudent to reduce the presence of semicarbazide in baby foods as swiftly as technological progress allows.”

The agency also recommended the industry change the lids for other products after baby foods have been tackled.

Besides baby food, bottled foods found to have traces of semicarbazide included fruit juices, jams, sterilized vegetables, pickles, mayonnaise, mustard, sauces, and ketchup. However, baby food had by far the strongest concentrations, probably because the contact between the food and the seal is more significant — the jars are small, but the cap still has to be big enough to fit a spoon in.

The Food and Drink Federation, a London-based European industry organization, said that, as a precaution, an industry task force is now working with the authority.
MAD COW HITS THE U.S.

Scientific Data Offer No Proof Of Beef Safety

By ANTONIO REGALADO Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Updated Dec. 29, 2003 12:01 a.m. ET

After last week's discovery of the first case of mad-cow disease in the U.S., government officials sought to reassure the public. White House spokesman Scott McClellan said President Bush had been eating beef, and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman said she'd serve it for Christmas.

Ms. Veneman even told CNN that beef from infected cows such as this one "should be entirely safe to eat" because its brain and spinal cord had been removed. Those tissues are known to be most infectious in cattle stricken with bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE.

But while federal officials' safety message was emphatic, the scientific evidence behind those claims isn't as certain.
“Secretary Veneman even told CNN that beef from infected cows such as this one “should be entirely safe to eat” because its brain and spinal cord had been removed.”

“But while federal officials safety message was emphatic, the scientific evidence behind those claims isn’t as certain.” (uncertainty, mistrust)

“Steaks and hamburgers made from beef muscle haven’t been shown to be dangerous, but some leading experts in Europe and the U.S. say the risks of meat from sick cattle remain unknown”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph 18</th>
<th>“Other experts say the agriculture department is on solid ground calling the risk from the recalled meat negligible. In the U.K. tens of millions of people were exposed to contaminated beef and so far there have only been 143 human cases linked to cattle. (trust)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 19</td>
<td>“And over the last decade, British scientists scrutinized scores of parts from sick cows, grinding them up and injecting them into the brains of healthy calves. In those experiments, animals injected with brain tissue always died. But so far, <em>none of the cattle inoculated with muscle have become sick.</em>” (certainty)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The repeated assertion by government officials that American beef is safe to eat -- despite the discovery of the first U.S. case of mad cow disease -- is based in large part on painstakingly acquired evidence that pure muscle from mad cows simply does not contain enough of the strange infectious material to give the disease to a human being.

Muscle meat contaminated with brain or spinal tissue from infected cows is another matter. Eating it can be deadly. Scientists believe that is how about 150 people worldwide have contracted the human version of mad cow disease, which first appeared in Britain in 1996. But muscle meat alone -- beef, in short -- appears safe.

The evidence for this is strong and convincing. But as with all assessment of biological risk, it is not absolute and unqualified.
My Lord; I’m Detecting A Lot Of

BULLSHIT!!!!
Bullsh#!t detected!
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

1. Don’t treat the news media as the enemy
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

1. Don’t treat the news media as the enemy
2. Respect media culture
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

1. Don’t treat the news media as the enemy
2. Respect media culture
3. Avoid ‘spin’
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

1. Don’t treat the news media as the enemy
2. Respect media culture
3. Avoid ‘spin’
4. Say YES, participate
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

1. Don’t treat the news media as the enemy
2. Respect media culture
3. Avoid ‘spin’
4. Say YES, participate
5. Be PROACTIVE
Improving Media Coverage of Risk

6. **Give the risk assessment details!** Tell them the basics about hazard; dose, the nature/severity of the harm, subpopulations at higher risk. Tell them relevant details about exposure…by what route, at what age, acute or chronic.
Improving Media Coverage of Risk