

Bleached chopsticks warning issued

October 5 2006

Taiwanese officials say they've found excessive levels of sulfur dioxide in some bamboo products, including disposable chopsticks and skewers.

The Taiwan Consumers' Foundation said people might be ingesting a substance that can cause osteoporosis, as well as serious allergic reactions, the Taipei Times reported Thursday. The newspaper noted there are no laws controlling the use of sulfur dioxide in bleaching and sanitizing bamboo products.

"The industry should make an effort to better sterilize their bamboo products," said National Taiwan University Professor Cheng Cheng-yung, a foundation member. "With a lower moisture content and vacuum packaging, there's no need to resort to sulfur dioxide as a sanitizer."

Other items the foundation said contain sulfur dioxide include bamboo dessert forks and coffee stirring sticks, the newspaper said.

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