

# Could butter substitute make cooks sick?

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U.S. restaurant cooks who spend hours at the stove could be at risk from a flavoring additive used in butter substitutes, a report says.

The additive, diacetyl, has already been linked to a lung condition found in employees in popcorn and food flavoring plants, the Seattle Intelligencer reports. When butter substitute is heated, diacetyl forms a vapor. The lung disease, bronchiolitis obliterans, can be fatal.

The newspaper commissioned a study on how much diacetyl is released during cooking and found that chefs in busy eateries, especially those that do a big trade in breakfast dishes like scrambled eggs, could be breathing in as much as factory workers. Some workers at a Jasper, Mo., popcorn plant developed the lung disease.

"Without a comprehensive evaluation it's impossible to assess the actual risk, but there is no doubt that this group of workers should be studied," Dr. Richard Kanwal of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

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