

Radiation traces found in Japanese baby formula

December 6 2011, By YURI KAGEYAMA , AP Business Writer



In this photo taken Tuesday, Dec. 6, 2011, a canned powdered milk for infants Meiji Step, manufactured and sold by Japan's major food and candy maker Meiji Co., is shown. Traces of radiation spilled from the hobbled Japanese nuclear plant were detected in baby formula Tuesday in the latest in a string of contaminated food turning up in this nation. Meiji recalled the canned powdered milk, with expiration dates of October 2012. But the company said the levels of radioactive cesium found were so low that they would not affect health. (AP Photo/Kyodo News) JAPAN OUT, MANDATORY CREDIT, NO LICENSING IN CHINA, FRANCE, HONG KONG, JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA

(AP) -- Traces of radiation spilled from Japan's hobbled nuclear plant

were detected in baby formula Tuesday in the latest case of contaminated food in the nation.

Major food and candy maker Meiji Co. said it was recalling canned powdered milk for infants, with expiration dates of October 2012, as a precaution.

The levels of radioactive cesium were well below government-set [safety limits](#), and the company said the amounts were low enough not to have any affect on babies' health even if they drank the formula every day.

Experts say children are more at risk than are adults of getting cancer and other illnesses from [radiation exposure](#).

"There is no problem because the levels are within the government limit," Kazuhiko Tsurumi, a Health Ministry official in charge of food safety, said of the radiation in Meiji milk.

The March 11 earthquake and tsunami in northeastern Japan sent three reactors into meltdown at Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, which have been spewing radiation into the air and ocean.

Some of that radiation has crept into food, such as rice, fish and beef. But this was the first time radiation was reported in baby formula.

Kyodo News said airborne [radioactive cesium](#) contaminated milk as it was being dried at a plant in Saitama prefecture in March, citing the company. The company was not immediately available for comment late Tuesday.

Meiji has about 40 percent of domestic [baby formula](#) sales, but the amount of recalled formula wasn't disclosed. The product is exported to Vietnam under a different name, Kyodo reported.

The levels of cesium-134 and cesium-137 in the milk were up to 31 becquerels per kilogram, which is below the government limit of 200 becquerels per kilogram set for milk.

The government has been reviewing its food safety and other radiation standards because some of them were not clearly defined before the [nuclear crisis](#).

Not all [food samples](#) are monitored for radiation, and readings have been voluntarily reported by the manufacturers, including the latest by Tokyo-based Meiji.

Many consumers are worried. Some stores are labeling where the food was grown or caught, allowing shoppers to opt for imports or products from parts of the country deemed safe.

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