

Gatorade pulls 'fire retardant' additive

January 26 2013

PepsiCo subsidiary Gatorade said Friday it was removing an ingredient from its popular citrus-flavored sports drink that has a second life as a fire retardant.

Brominated vegetable oil—patented as a chemical to help prevent flames from spreading—appears in a number of brands of [soft drinks](#) in the United States as an emulsifier.

An online petition on Change.org launched by Mississippi high school student and volleyball player Sarah Kavanagh urging Gatorade to stop using BVO drew more than 200,000 signatures.

"While our products are safe, we are making this change because we know that some consumers have a negative perception of BVO in Gatorade," said company spokeswoman Molly Carter in a statement to the [Chicago Tribune](#) newspaper.

Concern about BVO, which is banned from food in Europe and Japan, grew after a December 2011 article in Scientific American in which scientists called for a reassessment of its safety.

Some soda binge-drinkers such as video game players "have needed medical attention for [skin lesions](#), memory loss and nerve disorders, all symptoms of overexposure to bromine," the respected magazine said.

"When I went to Change.org to start my petition, I thought it might get a lot of support because no one wants to gulp down flame retardant,"

Kavanagh, 15, said in a Change.org statement. "This is so, so awesome."

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