

Coordinated approach needed to protect from arsenic exposure

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(HealthDay)—A coordinated approach is necessary for monitoring and regulating the arsenic content of foods, according to a viewpoint piece published online April 29 in *JAMA Internal Medicine*.

Ana Navas-Acien, M.D., Ph.D., from the Welch Center for Prevention, Epidemiology and Clinical Research, and Keeve E. Nachman, Ph.D., M.H.S., from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine—both in Baltimore, discuss the presence of arsenic in foods, specifically rice, [fruit juices](#), and chicken.

The authors note that there are currently few federal efforts to

characterize the arsenic content and species in foods. In response to recent [public concern](#), the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) has initiated focused analyses of arsenic in specific foods. Arsenic monitoring data should be collected and standards developed for specific foods. Physicians should notify their patients about sources of [arsenic exposure](#) and strategies for prevention. In cases of concern, urine total arsenic can be measured as a marker of exposure. In addition, regulatory agencies, [food producers](#), and legislative bodies have roles to play in reducing exposure. For example, FDA standards could help ensure the safety of food products. Given the insufficient evidence relating to arsenic-based drugs in animal production, the FDA should also consider limiting or banning their use. Federal or state legislation addressing dietary arsenic should also be considered.

"Protecting the public from exposure to dietary arsenic requires many coordinated measures," the authors write. "Raising public awareness is a first step toward long-term solutions that prevent dietary arsenic exposure."

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