

FDA inspectors find lead levels in tainted applesauce 2,000 times higher than proposed standards

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration inspectors have found levels of toxic lead 2,000 times higher than proposed standards in cinnamon

samples gathered at a facility in Ecuador linked to tainted applesauce pouches.

Tests conducted at an Ecuadorian facility run by Austrofoods (maker of the recalled applesauce) revealed that cinnamon supplied to the plant by another company, Negasmart, contained "extremely high levels of lead contamination, 5,110 parts per million (ppm) and 2,270 ppm," the FDA said in its latest update. To put that into context, an international body charged with setting lead limits in bark-sourced spices such as cinnamon "is considering adopting a maximum level of 2.5 ppm for lead in bark spices," the FDA said.

As of Dec. 18, 65 [children](#) younger than 6 years of age have been diagnosed with symptoms of lead poisoning tied to various brands of recalled applesauce. Last week, an FDA source said that the cinnamon used in the recalled applesauce may have been deliberately tainted with the toxic element.

"We're still in the midst of our investigation," Jim Jones, the FDA deputy commissioner for human foods, [told Politico](#). "But so far all of the signals we're getting lead to an intentional act on the part of someone in the [supply chain](#) and we're trying to sort of figure that out."

The applesauce pouches under recall so far are from three brands—Weis, WanaBana, and Schnucks. Each is tied to the same manufacturing facility in Ecuador, which the FDA said it is now inspecting.

According to *Politico*, the FDA suspects the deliberate adulteration of [cinnamon](#) included in the applesauce products was "economically motivated." Typically, that involves boosting the perceived quality of a product while producing it at a cheaper price.

More information: [More Information](#)

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