

FDA warns of toxic lead in cinnamon products

March 7 2024, by Dennis Thompson



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued a [health advisory](#) warning consumers that six brands of ground cinnamon are tainted with lead.

The FDA urged folks to throw away and not buy the following brands of ground cinnamon:

- La Fiesta, sold at La Superior SuperMercados
- Marcum, sold at Save A Lot
- MK, sold at SF Supermarket
- Swad, sold at Patel Brothers
- Supreme Tradition, sold at Dollar Tree and Family Dollar
- El Chilar, sold at La Joya Morelense in Baltimore

The new list of tainted ground cinnamon products resulted from an October 2023 recall of cinnamon applesauce and apple puree products due to elevated [lead levels](#), the FDA said.

That recall prompted FDA to test ground cinnamon sold in discount retail stores for the presence of lead or chromium.

The FDA has recommended that the companies behind these ground cinnamon brands recall their products, the agency said.

Lead is toxic to humans, particularly children, and there is no safe level of exposure, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. Initial symptoms of lead poisoning may include headaches, stomach and muscle aches, vomiting, anemia, irritability, fatigue and weight loss.

Children are especially vulnerable to [lead exposure](#) because of their smaller body sizes and rapid metabolism and growth, the FDA noted.

Exposure can cause developmental delays in [children](#) such as learning disabilities, behavioral problems and lowered IQ, the agency said.

The levels of lead in the listed ground cinnamons range from 2.03 to 3.4 parts per million, the FDA said.

Those levels are significantly lower than those found in the recalled cinnamon apple puree and applesauce products manufactured by Austrofoods, the agency said.

The ground cinnamon in those products, supplied by a now-defunct Ecuadorian company called Carlos Aguilera, had lead levels between 2,270 and 5,110 parts per million, the FDA said.

The applesauce investigation revealed the complex international web of food suppliers, processors and manufacturers that makes FDA oversight of imported products sold in American markets very tough, the agency said. Legally, the FDA's hands are tied.

"The FDA has limited authority over foreign ingredient suppliers who do not directly ship product to the U.S.," the agency explained in a statement on the applesauce recall. "This is because their food undergoes further manufacturing/processing prior to export. Thus, the FDA cannot take direct action with Negasmart or Carlos Aguilera."

In the case of the ground cinnamon, the FDA is targeting U.S. sellers of these products to keep the tainted items off shelves.

"Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the manufacturers and the importers to ensure the safety of the products that enter into the U.S. market," the FDA said in its new warning.

"The FDA also sent a letter to all cinnamon manufacturers, processors, distributors and facility operators in the U.S. reminding them of the requirement to implement controls to prevent contamination from potential chemical hazards in food, including in ground [cinnamon](#) products," the agency continued.

More information: Visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention for more on the [dangers of lead exposure](#).

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