

# Toxic lead found in cinnamon product, FDA says

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An additional cinnamon product sold in the United States has been found to contain high levels of lead, health officials are warning.

In a [health alert](#) issued Thursday, the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration said the ground [cinnamon](#) product, sold as El Servidor, joins a growing list of [cinnamon products](#) that have contained high levels of lead.

Through testing, the cinnamon was found to have elevated lead levels at 20 parts per million. Although the FDA doesn't set limits for [lead levels](#) in spices, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization has a proposed international safety standard of 2.5 parts per million of lead for bark spices like cinnamon, NBC News reported.

The FDA noted that it has asked the distributor to recall the product.

Lead in cinnamon products has become a growing problem: In March, the FDA warned about lead in fruit puree products sold at Dollar Tree, Family Dollar and other stores. Those products had levels of lead ranging from 2.03 to 3.4 parts per million.

The cinnamon identified in the new alert was sold at a supermarket in New York City, although it's unclear whether it was distributed more widely.

Leigh Frame, director of integrative medicine at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences, told NBC News that the new recall was "alarming."

"We sort of assume things are safe until proven otherwise," Frame said. "It's not until people get sick do we actually have these recalls. Often, it's too late; people have already consumed the products."

"It's a little scary to think about all the things that potentially could be lurking in our food system because we don't have the resources," she added.

No illnesses have been reported in the latest FDA warning, although the agency advised consumers to throw away the product immediately.

Elevated levels of lead can be toxic, particularly for [young children](#), who are more at risk because of their smaller body size and the fact that they are still growing, according to the FDA. High levels of lead exposure in this age group can cause learning disabilities and lowered IQ.

Short-term exposure can trigger headaches, [abdominal pain](#), vomiting and anemia. Meanwhile, long-term exposure can cause irritability, lethargy, fatigue, muscle aches or burning, constipation, difficulty concentrating, tremor and weight loss.

Frame recommends limiting exposure, particularly with young children.

"If you have cinnamon oatmeal every morning, maybe switch to a different variety for a while until we figure things out, just to reduce the exposure," she advised.

**More information:** The CDC has more on [lead poisoning](#).

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