

Statement on potential risks from cadmium in the diet of infants aged 0 to 12 months and children aged 1 to 5 years

Conclusions - Statement on potential risks from cadmium in the diet of infants

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88. Cadmium is present in the environment from both natural and anthropogenic sources. Natural sources include volcanic eruptions and erosion of cadmium ore-bearing rocks. Anthropogenic sources include non-ferrous metal smelting, burning fossil fuels, industrial incinerators and use of phosphate fertilisers.

89. Chronic exposure to cadmium causes lesions primarily in the kidney and bone and the metal has been classified by IARC as a Group 1 human

carcinogen. Cadmium has a biological half-life estimated to be up to 30 years.

90. Food is the major source of cadmium for infants up to 12 months and children up to 5 years of age. Foods making the major contribution to cadmium intake in infants and young children are bread, miscellaneous cereals, potatoes and soya. Cadmium intake via drinking water, air, soil and dust make only a minor contribution to total exposure. The highest total exposure to cadmium was found in solid food for 12 - <60-month old children which constituted up to 260% of the EFSA TWI of 2.5 mg/kg bw/week.

91. Although the EFSA Tolerable Weekly Intake of Cd was exceeded by infants in some cases, these exceedances were small in magnitude (160% maximum) and would not be expected to remain at this level over the decades of bioaccumulative exposure considered by EFSA in setting the HBGV. The Committee concluded that this was therefore not a major cause for concern. However, considering the cumulative nature of cadmium toxicity, efforts to minimise the levels of this metal in the environment should continue.

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