

Subject: Response to Letter: Action needed on Triclosan in light of human health risks

To: erica@healthyenvironmentforkids.ca

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From: Christine Norman <Christine.Norman@hc-sc.gc.ca>

Date: January 7, 2015 at 11:58:52 AM EST

Dear Ms. Phipps, Dr. Lanphear and Dr. Walker :

Thank you for your correspondence of December 16, 2014, addressed to the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health, concerning triclosan.

In 2012, the Government of Canada conducted a preliminary health and environmental assessment of triclosan under the Chemicals Management Plan (CMP). Based on this preliminary assessment, the Government is proposing that products such as toothpaste, soap, non-prescription drugs and natural health products containing triclosan do not pose a risk to human health at current levels of exposure. The preliminary assessment also proposed to conclude that the use of pest control products containing triclosan in Canada does not pose an unacceptable risk to human health. However, the preliminary assessment determined that the amount of triclosan that is released into the environment can affect plants and animals in lakes, streams and rivers. It was therefore proposed that triclosan is harmful to the environment but not human health as per the criteria set out in section 64 of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999*.

In order to determine if a substance may be harmful to human health, Health Canada scientists compare the levels Canadians may be exposed to against the lowest levels that could cause health effects. This includes, but is not limited to, consideration of potential effects related to liver, immune and endocrine function. The Department reviews available information, including Canadian and international studies, as part of the assessment process. For this particular

assessment, this included examining potential exposures to triclosan-containing products, breast milk, and environmental media (e.g. household dust). In coming to this proposed conclusion, Health Canada also took into consideration available information on the potential contribution of triclosan to antimicrobial resistance. The preliminary assessment found no clear link between products containing triclosan and increased antibacterial resistance at current environmental levels.

Under numerous monitoring and surveillance initiatives funded by the CMP, additional information on triclosan has become available. These initiatives include the [Second Report on Human Biomonitoring of Environmental Chemicals in Canada](#), the [Maternal-Infant Research on Environmental Chemicals \(MIREC\) Study](#), and the [Plastics and Personal Care Product Use in Pregnancy Study \(P4\)](#). Additionally, information on triclosan is available as part of the [CMP Environmental Monitoring and Surveillance Program](#). The Government is currently considering public comments received on the preliminary assessment. The final assessment, planned for release in the spring of 2015, will be updated to reflect all of this information as well as data submitted by industry as part of a mandatory survey in 2013 on the current manufacture, import, export or use of triclosan.

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If the proposed conclusion is confirmed in the final assessment, the Government of Canada will consider options to reduce releases of triclosan in the environment. Further information on triclosan can be found on the Chemicals Management Plan Website: <http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/fact-fait/glance-bref/triclosan-eng.php>
<http://www.chemicalsubstanceschimiques.gc.ca/plan/approach-approche/triclosan-eng.php>

Thank you for taking the time to write and I trust the above information addresses your concerns.

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- Christine Norman
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