

## **Pediatric Environmental Health Specialists Offer Strategies to Reduce Arsenic Exposure From Rice Consumption**

*A new article in The Journal of Pediatrics examines the potential for children and infants to be exposed to arsenic via consumption of common products containing rice. The authors recommend a diverse diet and provide a review of strategies to reduce exposure to arsenic in rice recommended by various sources.*

Phoenix, Arizona ([PRWEB](#)) October 08, 2015 -- Pediatric Environmental Health Specialists at the University of California San Francisco [PEHSU](#) (Western States Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit) along with researchers from the University of California, Berkeley and Dartmouth have released a new report reviewing the risks of childhood exposure to arsenic through consumption of rice, and potential health consequences. Rice is an important staple grain for large segments of the population. Children who regularly consume large amounts of rice or rice products may be exposed to amounts of arsenic exceeding the maximum amounts allowable in public drinking water systems in the U.S. The amount of arsenic exposure from rice is not enough to produce acute symptoms.

Chronic exposure to arsenic in high doses from water has been associated with increased risk for developing lung, bladder, and skin cancers, impaired intellectual development, diabetes, and other health problems. Although the levels of arsenic found in rice are lower than exposure levels in water known to produce such health risks, there is concern whether infants and children with a diet high in rice products are at risk. Children at particular risk for arsenic exposure include those that consume rice or rice products daily, those who consume a lot of rice as a cultural practice, or those with diets high in rice due to gluten-free requirements or to control allergens. “[Clinicians](#) should be aware that exposures to arsenic that children have from rice products (including those sweetened with brown rice syrup) may present a risk and that certain children have particularly high exposures due to dietary needs and preferences” states Dr. Mark Miller, Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of California San Francisco and Director of the Western States PEHSU.

The authors provide strategies to reduce [arsenic](#) exposure, including diversifying the diet of young people and encouraging the consumption of a variety of grains. Parents should consider alternates to rice when introducing food to infants by starting them on barley, oats or other grains. If rice cereal must be given to infants, parents are encouraged to limit rice to 1 serving per day. Additionally, families can adopt strategies to help minimize arsenic exposure, including rinsing rice in a colander prior to cooking, cooking rice with plenty of extra water, and choosing lower-arsenic varieties of rice (e.g. basmati). Parents should also limit the use of rice milk, or other rice beverages, for infants and children under 5 years of age. Healthcare professionals are encouraged to identify children at risk for high consumption of rice and rice products and counsel families on ways to decrease exposure in culturally sensitive ways when appropriate.

The American College of Medical [Toxicology](#) manages the PEHSU National Office – Western Operations. The PEHSU Mission is to improve the health of children through enhancing educational and consultation services to clinicians, health professionals, and the community regarding environmental health concerns.

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About The American College of Medical Toxicology

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The ACMT mission is to advance quality care of poisoned patients and public health through physicians who specialize in consultative, emergency, environmental, forensic, and occupational toxicology. For more information, visit <http://www.acmt.net>, or follow on Twitter [@acmt](#).



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