

## Triclosan safety reviews by Australian and US public health authorities

The Australian cosmetic and hygiene products industry places the highest regard on the safety of its products for workers, the public and the environment.

Ingredients in these products are assessed and regulated for human health protection and environmental safety by the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS).

Our industry fully supports the rigorous, independent, science-based regulatory system operating in Australia under NICNAS and the federal Health Department's National Drugs and Poison Scheduling Committee (NDSPC).

The protection of public health is the centrepiece of the Australian regulatory system.

Triclosan is an antibacterial ingredient used at low levels in some cosmetic, personal care and cleaning products as an anti-bacterial or preservative agent.

As has been reported in the Australian media, the US Food & Drug Administration has recently announced its ongoing review of triclosan, publishing a consumer update on this beneficial antibacterial ingredient - <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm205999.htm>.

A full safety review of triclosan in the context of its use in Australia has already been undertaken by NICNAS as part of its Priority Existing Chemical program.

Industry welcomed the release by NICNAS of its final Assessment Report for triclosan in January 2009 - <http://www.nicnas.gov.au/Publications/CAR/PEC/PEC30.asp>.

In this report, NICNAS concluded that:

*"...under normal conditions of consumer use, **the risk of adults and children being exposed to levels of triclosan that would lead to chronic health effects is low.**"*

NICNAS also made the following conclusions relating to human health and safety on the basis of its expert scientific assessment:

- *"The available data in humans and animals **provide no evidence that triclosan has the potential to cause harm to breastfed babies.**"*
- *"Furthermore, although there is a potential for breast-feeding babies to be exposed to triclosan via breast milk, this assessment indicates that it is likely to be the lowest source of exposure to babies, and **therefore the risk of an adverse health effect during lactation is very low.**"*
- *"...there is also **no evidence that the use of triclosan is leading to an increase in triclosan-resistant bacterial populations** or that there is any increased risk to humans regarding antibiotic resistance."*

In conjunction with expert assessors from the federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, NICNAS also made the following conclusions in relation to the environmental risks of triclosan:

- ***“If the limited data available from Queensland are representative of the rest of Australia, the risks of adverse impacts on fish and aquatic plants are at worst marginal.”***
- ***“As dilution is high in ocean outfalls, risks to marine species are considered to be low and at an acceptable level.”***

As expected, the NICNAS report identified some areas for improvement in managing risks relating to triclosan usage. These relate mainly to enhancing occupational safety and further investigating the actual extent, if any, of potential environmental impacts. They are being worked through by NICNAS in consultation with other Australian government departments and agencies as well as industry.

The Australian industry welcomes the expert, independent, science-based approach embodied in NICNAS’s conclusions and recommendations.

NICNAS has watching brief to review new studies and assessments from leading overseas agencies, and will no doubt consider any new information that may be published by the FDA in the future.

The US industry, through its national association SDA, has issued a detailed response to the announcements by the US FDA - see <http://www.cleaning101.com/newsroom/04-08-10.cfm>.

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