



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

### Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. FDA-2022-D-0278]

### Action Levels for Lead in Processed Food Intended for Babies and Young Children; Guidance for Industry; Availability

**AGENCY:** Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA or we) is announcing the availability of a final guidance for industry entitled “Action Levels for Lead in Processed Food Intended for Babies and Young Children.” The guidance establishes action levels for lead in certain processed foods intended for babies and young children less than 2 years old. The guidance is intended to set achievable action levels that will help further reduce lead in the food supply.

**DATES:** The announcement of the guidance is published in the *Federal Register* on [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*].

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit either electronic or written comments on FDA guidances at any time as follows:

#### *Electronic Submissions*

Submit electronic comments in the following way:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments. Comments submitted electronically, including attachments, to <https://www.regulations.gov> will be posted to the docket unchanged. Because your comment will be made public, you are solely responsible for ensuring that your comment does not include any confidential information that you or a third party may not wish to be posted, such as medical information, your or anyone else’s Social Security number, or confidential business information, such as a manufacturing process. Please note that if

you include your name, contact information, or other information that identifies you in the body of your comments, that information will be posted on <https://www.regulations.gov>.

- If you want to submit a comment with confidential information that you do not wish to be made available to the public, submit the comment as a written/paper submission and in the manner detailed (see “Written/Paper Submissions” and “Instructions”).

### *Written/Paper Submissions*

Submit written/paper submissions as follows:

- Mail/Hand delivery/Courier (for written/paper submissions): Dockets Management Staff (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852.
- For written/paper comments submitted to the Dockets Management Staff, FDA will post your comment, as well as any attachments, except for information submitted, marked and identified, as confidential, if submitted as detailed in “Instructions.”

*Instructions:* All submissions received must include the Docket No. FDA-2022-D-0278 for “Action Levels for Lead in Processed Food Intended for Babies and Young Children; Guidance for Industry.” Received comments will be placed in the docket and, except for those submitted as “Confidential Submissions,” publicly viewable at <https://www.regulations.gov> or at the Dockets Management Staff between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, 240-402-7500.

- Confidential Submissions--To submit a comment with confidential information that you do not wish to be made publicly available, submit your comments only as a written/paper submission. You should submit two copies total. One copy will include the information you claim to be confidential with a heading or cover note that states “THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.” We will review this copy, including the claimed confidential information, in our consideration of comments. The second

copy, which will have the claimed confidential information redacted/blacked out, will be available for public viewing and posted on <https://www.regulations.gov>. Submit both copies to the Dockets Management Staff. If you do not wish your name and contact information to be made publicly available, you can provide this information on the cover sheet and not in the body of your comments and you must identify this information as “confidential.” Any information marked as “confidential” will not be disclosed except in accordance with 21 CFR 10.20 and other applicable disclosure law. For more information about FDA’s posting of comments to public dockets, see 80 FR 56469, September 18, 2015, or access the information at:

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2015-09-18/pdf/2015-23389.pdf>.

*Docket:* For access to the docket to read background documents or the electronic and written/paper comments received, go to <https://www.regulations.gov> and insert the docket number, found in brackets in the heading of this document, into the “Search” box and follow the prompts and/or go to the Dockets Management Staff, 5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852, 240-402-7500.

You may submit comments on any guidance at any time (see 21 CFR 10.115(g)(5)).

Submit written requests for single copies of the guidance to the Office of Food Chemical Safety, Dietary Supplements, and Innovation, Human Foods Program, Food and Drug Administration, 5001 Campus Dr., College Park, MD 20740. Send two self-addressed adhesive labels to assist that office in processing your request. See the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section for electronic access to the guidance.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Eileen Abt, Office of Food Chemical Safety, Dietary Supplements, and Innovation, Human Foods Program, Food and Drug Administration, 5001 Campus Dr., College Park, MD 20740, 240-402-1700; or Holli Kubicki, Office of Policy, Regulations, and Information, Human Foods Program, Food and Drug Administration, 5001 Campus Dr., College Park, MD 20740, 240-402-2378.

## SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

### I. Background

We are announcing the availability of a guidance for industry entitled “Action Levels for Lead in Processed Food Intended for Babies and Young Children.” We are issuing this guidance consistent with our good guidance practices regulation (21 CFR 10.115). The guidance represents the current thinking of FDA on this topic. It does not establish any rights for any person and is not binding on FDA or the public. You can use an alternative approach if it satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations.

In the *Federal Register* of January 25, 2023 (88 FR 4749), we made available a draft guidance for industry entitled “Action Levels for Lead in Food Intended for Babies and Young Children” and gave interested parties an opportunity to submit comments by March 27, 2023, for us to consider before beginning work on the final version of the guidance. In the *Federal Register* of April 6, 2023 (88 FR 20525), we announced that we were reopening the comment period until May 8, 2023, to allow interested parties additional time to submit comments. We received several comments on the draft guidance and have modified the final guidance where appropriate. Changes to the guidance include clarifications to the foods that the guidance addresses, including the age range of the foods’ intended consumers. We added information about the method that FDA uses to test for lead in food and made several editorial changes to improve clarity of the guidance. We also collected and analyzed additional samples from our Toxic Elements Program and special FDA surveys to inform our exposure and achievability assessments. The guidance announced in this notice finalizes the draft guidance dated January 2023.

In accordance with § 109.6 (21 CFR 109.6), this guidance establishes the following action levels for lead in processed food intended for babies and young children less than 2 years old: 10 parts per billion (ppb) for fruits, vegetables (excluding single-ingredient root vegetables), mixtures (including grain- and meat-based mixtures), yogurts, custards/puddings,

and single-ingredient meats; 20 ppb for single-ingredient root vegetables; and 20 ppb for dry infant cereals. Consistent with § 109.6(d), these action levels reflect levels of lead at which FDA may regard the food as adulterated within the meaning of section 402(a)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 342(a)(1)). We intend to consider these action levels, in addition to other factors, when considering whether to bring enforcement action in a particular case.

## II. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

This guidance contains no collection of information. Therefore, clearance by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 is not required.

## III. Electronic Access

Persons with access to the internet may obtain the guidance at <https://www.fda.gov/FoodGuidances>, <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents>, or <https://www.regulations.gov>. Use the FDA website listed in the previous sentence to find the most current version of the guidance.

Dated: December 27, 2024.

**Kimberlee Trzeciak,**

*Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Legislation, and International Affairs.*

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