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## Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food – have your say on the draft!

**17.03.2023** - EFSA experts provisionally concluded that mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH) do not pose a health concern. They also confirmed that some substances in the group known as mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) are a possible health concern.



computer generated picture

symbolic picture

These are some of the conclusions of a draft scientific opinion that was launched for public consultation today and updates EFSA's previous risk assessment of mineral oil hydrocarbons in food.

Mineral#oil hydrocarbons (MOH) comprise a wide range of chemical compounds obtained mainly from petroleum distillation and refining. They are categorised into two main groups referred to as MOSH and MOAH.

“For MOSH, adverse effects on the liver were observed in a specific strain of rat, but the evidence suggests that these effects are not relevant for humans. Therefore, we were able to rule out a risk for public health,” said James Kevin Chipman, Chair of the working group on mineral oil hydrocarbons.

Experts also looked at two different types of MOAH, concluding for one that it may contain genotoxic substances that can damage DNA in cells and may cause cancer. For genotoxins like these it is not possible to establish a safe level.

Little information is available on the occurrence of MOAH in food, so experts worked on two different predictive scenarios, both of which indicated a possible health concern using a margin of exposure approach.

### Mineral oil hydrocarbons in food

MOH can enter food in many ways - through environmental contamination, use of lubricants for machinery, release agents, processing aids, food or feed additives and migration from food contact materials.#They have been found in a variety of foods, which typically contain higher levels of MOSH than MOAH. The highest levels of MOH were found in vegetable oils and the highest exposure was estimated for young people, especially infants who have been fed exclusively with infant formula containing high levels of MOSH.



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### Recommendations

Experts recommended that more research is done to quantify the presence of MOAH in food and that toxicity data are collected to better assess the risks they pose. For MOSH, it is important to keep studying the possible long-term effects on human health.