

Triclosan Fact Sheet

Triclosan is used to kill bacteria. It is added to soaps and other consumer products labeled as “antibacterial” or “antimicrobial.”

Triclosan is found in

- Many liquid hand soaps described as “antibacterial” on the label.
- Some toothpastes, deodorants, cosmetics, facial cleansers, body washes, and mouthwashes.
- Many consumer products, such as some cutting boards, toys, clothes, towels, paint, and garden hoses.

Possible health concerns

Scientists are still studying how triclosan may affect people’s health. There is concern that triclosan:

- May interfere with the body’s natural hormones.
- May make it harder for antibiotic medicines to fight infections in the body. This is because overuse of triclosan may cause changes in bacteria that make them harder to kill.

Possible ways to reduce exposure

- Choose ordinary soap instead of soap described as “antibacterial” on the label. Antibacterial soap with triclosan provides no known extra health benefits over ordinary soap.
 - Avoid products that contain triclosan, unless you have a medical reason for using them. For example, toothpaste with triclosan may help prevent gingivitis (inflammation of the gums).
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For more information:

National Biomonitoring Program fact sheet on triclosan: www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/Triclosan_FactSheet.html

Triclosan in the San Francisco Bay: www.sfei.org/sites/default/files/RMP2011_TriclosanFactsheet_Final4web.pdf