



## How The Baby Food Safety Act Will Protect Millions of Babies

*Healthy Babies Bright Futures is thrilled to support the Baby Food Safety Act, announced today by Senator Klobuchar.*

**MAY 9, 2024** — Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF) supports the Baby Food Safety Act of 2024, introduced today by Senator Klobuchar. The contamination of cinnamon applesauce food pouches in 2023 made heavy metals in baby foods a hot topic. However, this is not a new problem — and the Baby Food Safety Act gets us one step closer to solving it.

“The science on these toxic heavy metals is clear: there is no question of the harm they cause to babies’ developing brains,” says Jane Houlihan, Healthy Babies Bright Futures’ Research Director. “A Healthy Babies Bright Futures analysis showed that children under two years of age lose over 11 million IQ points from exposures to heavy metals in food.”

“What’s more is that one in six children in America has a developmental disability, and exposure to toxic heavy metals causes permanent decreases in IQ, diminished future economic productivity, and lifelong problems with learning and behavior,” Houlihan says. **“There are no safe levels of exposure to heavy metals for children.** Even in the trace amounts found in food, these contaminants can alter the developing brain and erodes a child’s IQ. The impacts add up with each meal or snack a baby eats. Despite the risks, with few exceptions, there are *still* no enforceable limits for toxic heavy metals in baby food.”

“In 2019, a Healthy Babies Bright Futures study [found heavy metals in 95% of baby foods tested](#),” says Charlotte Brody, HBBF’s National Director. “Yet, current FDA regulations on heavy metals in baby food are still lax and ineffective at protecting babies’ brain development. And the proposed action levels in the FDA’s Closer to Zero plan that were laid out in January of 2023 are doing way too little way too slowly.”

Every year, four million babies start to eat solid foods. These babies need a government that keeps them safe from neurotoxic chemicals in their food. The Baby Food Safety Act will protect vulnerable infants by ensuring that swift, effective actions to remove heavy metals from baby foods are taken by both government agencies *and* manufacturers.



“Government actions to protect babies from the toxic heavy metals in their food are long overdue, and The Baby Food Safety Act will play a crucial role in protecting the millions of infants and toddlers that are exposed to these contaminants every day,” Brody says.

The legislation proposed by Senators Klobuchar and Duckworth will positively impact the future of millions of babies across the country.

**ABOUT HBBF:** Healthy Babies Bright Futures is dedicated to measurably reducing babies’ exposure to toxic chemicals that harm brain development. We focus on chemicals with the strongest bodies of evidence supporting their role in developmental harm, such as lead, arsenic, mercury, and cadmium. HBBF leverages data-driven opportunities to reduce chemical exposures that harm babies’ brain development.

## RESOURCES

### [What’s In My Baby’s Food? \(2019\)](#)

Healthy Babies Bright Futures tested 168 foods consumed by babies and toddlers from a wide range of brands, including Gerber, Earth’s Best, Beech-Nut, and popular store brands.

- We found toxic heavy metals in 95% of containers tested. One in four baby foods contained all four metals assessed by our testing lab—arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury.
- Four of seven infant rice cereals tested contained inorganic arsenic (the most toxic form of arsenic) in excess of FDA’s proposed action level of 100 parts per billion (ppb).
- 83% of baby foods tested had more lead than the 1-ppb limit endorsed by public health advocates, and one of every five foods tested had over 10 times that amount.
- 88% of foods tested lack any federal standards or guidance on maximum safe levels of toxic heavy metals like arsenic and lead.

### [Is Homemade Baby Food Better? \(2022\)](#)

Healthy Babies Bright Futures tested 288 foods and examined 7,000+ additional food testing data from published studies.

- **94% of all food samples we tested contained detectable amounts of toxic heavy metals.**



- The 10 most heavily contaminated foods consumed by babies (beginning with the highest) are: rice cakes, crisped rice cereal, rice-based puffs, brown rice, teething biscuits and rice-based rusks, white rice, raisins, teething crackers (non-rice), granola bar with raisins, and oat-ring cereal.
- Rice cakes and crisped rice cereal are heavily contaminated with arsenic. They contain higher levels of arsenic than any other foods tested. Both stand out as foods to avoid for children and adults alike.
- The 10 least contaminated foods consumed by babies, beginning with the lowest, are: banana, grits, baby food brand meats, butternut squash, lamb, apple, pork, eggs, oranges, and watermelon.

### **Parent Tip Sheets**

- [Five Baby Foods with Arsenic and Lead — and Safer Choices](#)
- [The Data-Driven Guide to Healthy Baby Food:](#) Six tips to reduce babies' exposures to toxic heavy metals in their diet
- [The 40 Baby Foods Menu:](#) What to serve, limit, and avoid to lower babies' exposures to toxic heavy metals