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Rep. Krishnamoorthi's Baby Food Safety Act Promises to Protect Babies' Brain Development By Limiting Heavy Metals in Baby Food

The proposed bill comes a month after the House Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy Committee on Oversight and Reform found that commercial baby foods are tainted with significant levels of toxic heavy metals.

WASHINGTON, DC —Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi introduced the Baby Food Safety Act today to limit the presence of toxic elements in infant and toddler food. The introduction of the bill follows [last month's Congressional report](#) showing that baby foods are contaminated with dangerous levels of toxic heavy metals, with amounts of arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury in excess of recommended limits.

The Baby Food Safety Act of 2021, which is co-sponsored by Rep. Tony Cardenas and Senators Tammy Duckworth and Amy Klobuchar, would lower the allowable levels of arsenic, mercury, lead, and cadmium in baby food and increase monitoring and enforcement of those levels.

Toxic heavy metals endanger infant neurological development and long-term brain function, but current FDA regulations on heavy metals in baby food are lax and ineffective at protecting babies' brain development. A Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF) [2019 study](#), which prompted the Congressional Subcommittee report, **found heavy metals in 95% of baby foods tested.**

"Government actions to protect babies from the toxic heavy metals in their food are long overdue," says Charlotte Brody, National Director of Healthy Babies Bright Futures. "The Baby Food Safety Act is much more than a baby step to protect the millions of infants and toddlers that are exposed to these contaminants every day."

In addition to creating stricter standards for allowable levels of toxic elements over the next three years, the bill would also require a summary of progress, monitoring results, evaluation of the effectiveness of the preventive controls in reducing the cumulative exposure of children to toxic elements in their food, and a public awareness campaign to help parents understand the risks and choose safer foods.



The Baby Food Safety Act will also require the FDA to update their guidelines on what harm these neurotoxic chemicals cause to babies' development. Currently, heavy metals in baby food are considered safe if their presence doesn't cause "serious illness or death," but cumulative exposures to heavy metals leads to long term results.

Children under two years of age lose over 11 million IQ points from exposures to heavy metals in food, according to an analysis commissioned by HBBF and conducted by Abt Associates. 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 increased risk of future criminal and antisocial behavior in children.

"The science on these toxic metals is clear: there is no question of the harm they cause to babies' developing brains," added Jane Houlihan, HBBF's Research Director. "The Baby Food Safety Act will protect our vulnerable infants by ensuring that swift, effective actions to remove heavy metals from baby foods are taken by both government agencies and manufacturers."

In addition to support from HBBF, the bill is also endorsed by Alaska Community Action on Toxics, Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment, American Sustainable Business Council, Breast Cancer Prevention Partners, Center for Environmental Health, Clean and Healthy New York, Clean Production Action, Defend Our Health, Earthjustice, Ecology Center, Environmental Working Group, Families Advocating for Chemicals and Toxics Safety (FACTS), Getting Ready for Baby, Toxic Free NC, and Women's Voices for the Earth.

ABOUT HEALTHY BABIES BRIGHT FUTURES: [Healthy Babies Bright Futures](#) (HBBF) is an alliance of scientists, nonprofit organizations and donors working to create and support initiatives that measurably reduce exposures to neurotoxic chemicals in the first one thousand days of development. Our efforts are inspired and supported by science and data, and designed to help restore the chance for a full life to children who would otherwise face brain-diminishing exposures to toxic chemicals beginning in utero.

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