

The Baby Food Safety Act of 2021

*Introduced by Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL), Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN),
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Inorganic arsenic, lead, cadmium, and mercury are toxic heavy metals. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the World Health Organization have declared them dangerous to human health, particularly to babies and children, who are most vulnerable to their neurotoxic effects. Even low levels of exposure can cause permanent decreases in IQ, diminished future economic productivity, and increased risk of future criminal and antisocial behavior in children. It is for this reason that the FDA and EPA currently regulate the levels of toxic heavy metals allowed in bottled and drinking water.

However, despite these risks, many baby foods contain high levels of toxic heavy metals, and there is currently no existing law or regulation to curb the presence of toxic heavy metals in baby food. Our bill, the **Baby Food Safety Act of 2021**, would require manufacturers and the FDA to take long overdue action by:

- Setting maximum levels of inorganic arsenic (10 ppb, 15 ppb for cereal), lead (5 ppb, 10 ppb for cereal), cadmium (5 ppb, 10 ppb for cereal), and mercury (2 ppb) allowed in baby food that manufacturers would have to meet within one year.
- Requiring those levels to be lowered further within two years through FDA guidance, and again after three years through regulation.
- Requiring manufacturers to test their final products – not just ingredients – for toxic heavy metals (ingredient testing significantly underestimates toxic heavy metal levels).
- Requiring manufacturers to post the results of their product testing online twice per year.
- Establishing a public awareness campaign through the CDC to highlight the risks posed by toxic heavy metals in baby food.
- Authorizing \$50 million for research on agricultural methods of reducing toxic heavy metals in crops.

Parents expect the baby food sold on store shelves to be safe and healthy, and are depending on the federal government to finally address this grave issue impacting youth public health. Our bicameral legislation will dramatically reduce toxic heavy metals in baby food, educate parents about the risks, and invest in cutting edge farming technology to reduce any economic barriers to making baby food safe for consumption.

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