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Legal Alerts

FDA Issues New Guidance on Lead Risks in Ground Cinnamon

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") has issued an updated alert on elevated lead levels found in multiple ground cinnamon products, raising serious food safety and compliance concerns. Brands, manufacturers and distributors using cinnamon as an ingredient should immediately assess their sourcing and supply chain practices to ensure alignment with FDA regulations.

FDA Alerts and Product Recalls

The presence of lead in cinnamon products has been the subject of previous FDA alerts.

On March 6, 2024, the FDA issued an alert regarding the presence of elevated levels of lead in certain cinnamon products. The FDA provided guidance on the affected products and their corresponding lead concentrations, measured in parts per million (ppm). The brand names identified at that time included La Fiesta, Marcum, MK, Swad, Supreme Tradition and El Chilar.

On July 25, 2024, the FDA issued an additional alert to include the brand El Servidor. Through product testing conducted by the New York State Department of Agriculture and confirmed by the FDA, consumers were advised to dispose of this product as exposure may be unsafe.

Most recently, the FDA updated a third alert that identified additional cinnamon products with elevated lead levels. This alert, issued on September 12, 2025, contained reports of lead concentrations in the affected products which ranged from 2.03 ppm to 7.68 ppm. The public health alert again advised customers to discard and avoid buying any ground cinnamon products containing high levels of lead. The FDA has recommended that these products be voluntarily recalled. The FDA is continuing to review sample results received from state partners and will update the alert as necessary if additional findings show that exposure to these products may be unsafe.

Potential Health Effects

Based on the initial assessment, product consumption is likely to contribute to elevated levels of lead in the blood, which may cause health complications that are heightened for children. The potential for adverse health effects from consuming food that is contaminated with lead varies based on factors such as: (1) amount consumed, (2) age of the consumer and (3) other exposures to different sources of lead.

Because there is no known safe level of exposure to lead, the FDA continues to monitor and regulate the level of lead in foods due to the higher risks for vulnerable subpopulations.

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Companies using cinnamon in their products should immediately review supplier documentation, conduct additional ingredient testing as needed and ensure full compliance with FDA guidance. Strict adherence to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) is essential to prevent contamination, reduce regulatory exposure and safeguard public health and having documented raw material supplier and contract manufacturer obligations to comply with law, maintain appropriate insurance and indemnify the company in the event of regulatory action or consumer claims can go a long way toward mitigating the risk to a brand of an incident of this nature.

For guidance on next steps, please contact our Food & Beverage team.

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