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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D C 20204

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Mr. Barry Castleman
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Dear Mr. Castleman:

Thank you for your letter of April 25, 1972, and the enclosed material.

During the past six months various members of the Food and Drug Administration have had a number of conferences with Dr. Selikoff and his staff here and in New York. We have collected and reviewed about one hundred papers on asbestos toxicity.

Largely because of the long time lag and also because of a reluctance to allow human exposure to a potentially toxic substance the dose response relationships of asbestos toxicity are undetermined. The industrial tolerance rests on rather shaky ground, however it will be 20 to 40 years before it can be determined whether it is too high or too low.

In the meantime, tremolite, because it is not widely used, does not have the background of proven injury as does chrysotile. I have talked with some experts who feel that tremolite is less hazardous than other forms of asbestos. This point can not be settled by argument.

With regard to cosmetics, the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, which governs our activities states precisely that products must be shown to contain a harmful or deleterious substance before they are subject to action, i.e. The FDA must be prepared to prove a cosmetic is hazardous before it can act against it.

Condoms and diaphragms are dusted with talc. Henderson et al (Henderson, W. J., C. A. F. Joslin, A. C. Turnbull and K. Griffiths,

Talc and carcinoma of the ovary and cervix, J. Obstet Gynecol Br. Commonw, 78:266 - 272, (March), 1971)] were able to demonstrate talc, but not asbestos within malignant tissue. Unfortunately, they also noted talc particles in normal tissue.

I would very much like to see the results of a survey such as you discuss. There may be a problem in that women who do not use talc dusted contraceptives may have been examined with talc dusted gloves so that there may be some problem in developing a control group.

Sincerely yours,

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