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Polychlorinated biphenyls toxicity under more suspicion

The Food and Drug Administration is taking a look at new evidence of the toxicity of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Maximum tolerance levels for PCBs in foods were set in 1973 after FDA studies of pretzels, potato chips, cookies and other food products found traces of the substances in some packaging, and in a lower percentage of the foods they contained.

Recent research suggests that PCBs may be hazardous at the levels set by the FDA, or even lower. Investigations at the University of Wisconsin's Primate Research Center show monkeys put on diets containing lower levels of PCBs than the tolerances established by the FDA to suffer a variety of physical problems. These study results are leading some consumer representatives to ask the FDA for a move to reduce the tolerance levels now in effect.

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