

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

TO : M. D. Kinslow
Assistant Commissioner for Program Coordination

DATE: July 1, 1971

John Eisenberg

FROM : Ernest L. Brisson, Program Analyst
Program and Policy Coordination Staff, ACPC

SUBJECT: Asbestos in Baby Powder

I talked to Rudy Vignone, Director, Office of Compliance in the Bureau of Product Safety today to get detailed information on a report that asbestos fibers had been found in some baby powders.

The Consumer Representative, FTC, in New York City, had advised the Bureau of the report after hearing of it from the New York City Department of Air Resources. An article on this subject has already appeared in the New York Post (June 30, 1971). It seems that Dr. Selikoff had run two different samples of baby powder and found 5-25% by weight asbestos most of which was less than 5 microns in size. (The smaller the size, the greater degree of hazard.) The asbestos was identified as tremolite and amphyllite. Talc beds in New York and California may be implicated.

Mr. Romer of the New York City Department of Air Resources has sent a copy of his Department's report to Secretary Richardson last Monday. The Bureau has contacted Mr. Romer and asked for a copy of his report and has also alerted Mr. Fine.

There is some question of who should handle this problem. WPS or the Bureau of Foods -- this should be resolved quickly. In addition, I have asked Mr. Vignone to brief Mr. Jensen or accompany him to the Bureau's staff meeting with the Commissioner tomorrow as I intend to raise the topic during the meeting.

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