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Maximum Tolerable Limit Of PCB Recommended

According to the Council, the recommendation is based on its official investigation findings, figurings and assumptions and various official American reference data.

The Japanese people's average daily PCB intake has been figured at 72.4 micrograms by relating the average of PCB content in food samples the council examined and the maximum possible PCB intake through foodstuff ascertained through the fiscal 1968 national nutrition survey findings. A predominant 9.4 per cent of the 72.4 micrograms has been assumed to come from fish and shellfish.

American research data concerning the semi-acute and chronic toxicity and ill genetic effects of PCB so far discovered through experiments on mice showed that, in human terms, 5 micrograms per one kilogram of body weight, that is 250 micrograms for an adult weighing to kilograms is permissible per day.

For an average Japanese, that limit could be observed if his daily PCB intake through fish and shellfish, the major items in the Japanese meals, is held down at 180 micrograms. In that case, the maximum tolerable PCB content in fish and shellfish daily consumed should be 1.41 ppm.

The 1.41 ppm figure has been cut down to 1 ppm and the two different standards have been set for offshore and inshore fish and shellfish because the offshore fish and shellfish usually eaten by the Japanese are three times the inshore types.

The council has deferred its decision on such provisional standards applicable to pregnant women and infants due to shortage of research data. It also saw the need for setting similar standards for meals and vegetables.

Both the Council and the Health and Welfare Ministry claimed the standards could bring good results if properly applied through new surveillance, guidance and consultation measures to be worked out in about a month.

But the provisional recommendation and its backgrounds have invited an instant surge of criticisms and complaints from numerous observers.

A typical criticism was voiced by Dr. K. Fujiwara, chief researcher at the Kyoto Municipal Public Health Institute he considered the 3 ppm limit set for inshore fish as too high.

It should have been set at less than 1 ppm since the Japanese eat five to 10 times as much fish and shellfish as the Americans, plus many derivative foodstuffs, he asserted.

He also wondered how effectively the Ministry expects the inadequately-equipped local health authorities to do the PCB analyzing jobs.

Fish and shellfish in Japan's six major inshore or inland fishing grounds are contaminated well over 3 ppm, he added.

Other critics considered the recommendation far from adequate because of its neglect of the past PCB accumulations in the bodies of Japanese.

Admitting the inadequacy of local health authorities' analytical capacities, even an environmental official of the Ministry said all what each Japanese can do to defend himself against PCB contamination is to prefer offshore fish to coastal ones as far as he can.

MITI To Build Test Plant For PCB Treatment

To protect the human body from environmental pollution under a measure for security guarantee of chemical products, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry has decided to build a pilot plant to recover and incinerate electric appliances such as transformers and condensers, and pressure sensitive papers containing PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) in cooperation with The Japan Electric Manufacturers' Association.

The pilot plant will be constructed at the Environmental Pollution Resources Research Laboratory, for completion this September.

MITI, moreover, plans establishment of a semi-governmental new company to carry out recovery and treatment of substances containing PCB, and study of treatment technology within this year.

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