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FOR MONSANTO CHEMICAL COMPANY

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STATEMENT BY DR. CHARLES EDWARDS

NEIL BOGGS: The chemical known as PCB has been used for 40 years in the manufacturing of some plastics, and adhesives, printing ink, building materials and paper products.

Recently there's been concern. The chemical, which has shown up in recycled paper used in packaging certain foods might contain a health hazard.

Today the Food and Drug Administration called a press briefing to try to clear up the situation.

Cal Thomas reports.

CAL THOMAS: The PCB chemical appears in packages containing rice, oatmeal, shredded wheat, spaghetti, pancake mix, and other unlined boxed products. The FDA said much of the concern about PCB has been exaggerated and that it would take an unusual consumption of food tainted with the chemical to cause illness.

But FDA Commissioner, Dr. Charles Edwards, says there still are many gray areas of information about PCB.

DR. CHARLES EDWARDS: We still have as many questions as answers, but we do have some answers. We do know that as a

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toxic substance PCB's are potential but not immediate health hazards. We do know that its background level in the environment is not high. But we do -- but we do not know how long term exposure to PCB might affect human health. We can not yet explain the inconsistent presence of the chemical in certain areas of our environment.

THOMAS: Dr. Edwards says the Monsanto Company of St. Louis, which has recycled the paper containing PCB, has agreed to stop using it in the manufacturing of food packages. And the NCR Company which makes the carbonless carbon paper, which has been recycled will stop making that product.

Meanwhile, Dr. Edwards says there should be no public alarm about the effects of food packages still on the grocers' shelves.

Cal Thomas, News 4 Washington.