

EPA Promotes Safer Use of Insect Repellent DEET

New labeling requirements to ensure the safe use of insect repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) were issued by EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs under a Registration Eligibility Decision (RED). EPA is issuing the new labeling requirements as a result of a comprehensive review of the most recent health and safety data available on DEET, the active ingredient in the most widely used insect repellents.

Based on its review EPA said it determined that DEET, if used as directed, will not pose significant health risks to consumers. However, EPA is requiring changes to current labels to ensure that DEET is applied safely, particularly on children.

When DEET products make cosmetic claims, EPA is requiring that labeling for insect repellency be displayed prominently - - before cosmetic claims. The Agency said it is concerned that prominent cosmetic claims on DEET labels distract consumers from label instructions that urge users to apply cautiously and sparingly.

For a copy of the RED, call EPA at 703.305.5805. Other information is also available at: www.epa.gov/oppfead1/cb/csb_page/qsas/deet.htm.

Talc and Ovarian Cancer

In a review of the epidemiology of ovarian cancer, theories regarding the etiology of ovarian cancer developed from epidemiology studies were discussed (Seminars in Oncology, 25(3): 255-264, 1998). One theory discussed was that "the ovary is exposed to carcinogens that can travel to the ovary via the vagina and fallopian tubes." Talc and asbestos exposures were the only exposures described.

The July 1998 Redbook also has an article titled "How to Outsmart Ovarian Cancer" which warns that talc use may increase vulnerability to ovarian cancer. Without providing a source, this article also states "As for cornstarch, long thought to be safe, some experts now believe that it, too may be hazardous."

Carcinogen Report Now on The Net; Hard Copies Available From NIEHS

Hard copies of the 8th Report on Carcinogens (RoC), or the 8th RoC Summary (which contains the same information that is in the full report with the exception of specifics on regulations promulgated by regulatory health agencies) can be obtained by contacting the NIEHS Environmental Health Information Service, ATTN: Order Processing, P.O.Box 12510, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2510, fax number 919.541.0763; e-mail: ehis@niehs.nih.gov.

The 8th RoC Summary is also available on the Internet and can be accessed from the NIEHS Environmental Information Service Home Page at: <http://ehis.niehs.nih.gov/> or from the NTP Home Page at: <http://ntp-server.niehs.nih.gov/>.

Questions or comments concerning the report should be directed to C.W. Jameson, NTP, Report on Carcinogens, MD EC-14, P.O. Box 12233, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709; phone 919.541.4096, fax 919.541.2242; e-mail jameson@niehs.nih.gov.