

# Toxic Chemicals in Dairy Products

As if the problematic chemicals found naturally in dairy products do not endanger your health enough to be a reason to stop consuming them, you also must factor in how dairy acts as a magnet to absorb even more pernicious contaminants from the surrounding environment. It's a one-two punch to your well-being and the chemical load levels don't necessarily improve much, if at all, if you use organic dairy products.



You've probably heard of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), man-made chemicals first produced by Monsanto, used to insulate transformers and to produce adhesives and a variety of industrial products. These chemicals are toxic to life (cancer causing) and don't break down or disintegrate easily in nature, as evidenced by the fact they are still commonly found in the environment even though the U.S. banned their production many years ago.

PCB's love to take up residence in the fatty tissues of animals and are then excreted through their waste products, such as milk and cheese.

A 2012 study in the journal *Food Chemistry & Toxicology* measured the levels of PCBs in 61 commercially available brands of cheese in Europe. "There were higher levels of PCBs in organic than in conventional brands," concluded the scientists. "Levels of dioxin-like PCBs in both organic and conventional types of cheese reached concentrations above 100% of the levels established by the EU (European Union)." Other toxic chemicals found in the cheese, regardless of cheese type, included a range of pesticides. Italian scientists reported in 2006 how "humans continue to be exposed to the toxic effects of PCBs because of their resistance to chemical and biological decomposition, their capacity of bioaccumulation and their long half-life." The highest concentrations of PCBs, they wrote, are in dairy products, especially milk and butter. By consuming dairy products and the PCBs they carry, you raise your risk of developing breast, prostate, testicular, ovarian and uterine cancers, and also elevate your risk of infertility and endocrine system disruption.



**Children are particularly at risk when it comes to absorbing high levels of contaminants from dairy foods. Their bodies act as natural sponges and they have low thresholds of tolerance to toxins, whose effects can last a lifetime. A 2012 food contaminant study done on children and adults in California, published in the journal *Environmental Health*, searched for 11 toxic compounds in the foods commonly consumed by preschool-age children (2-4 years of age), school-age children (5-7 years of age) along with the parents of these children. Altogether, more than 1,000 people were evaluated. The findings were nothing short of shocking. “Cancer benchmark levels were exceeded by all children (100%) for arsenic, dieldrin, DDE, and dioxins,” the research team wrote. “Greatest exposure to pesticides from foods was from dairy foods.”**

The levels of pesticides being found in cow's milk should be making headlines throughout the world. During 2013 a group of scientists in Poland measured the pesticides in 15 samples of cow's milk taken from throughout that country and found “high levels” of DDE, DDT, heptachlor and aldrin, all pesticides toxic to humans.

Lindane was another type that “exceeded permissible limits.” A similar assessment of pesticides in cow's milk, this one from Africa, found high levels of five pesticides “above the residue limits set by the World Health Organization in 2008.” Furthermore, concluded the scientists involved in this study, “bioaccumulation of these residues is likely to pose health risks to the consumers of milk.”

All of the chemicals mentioned in the preceding paragraphs fall under the category of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), most all of which were developed after World War II. Some of the most extensive studies of POP contamination in food have been conducted in Spain. A 2014 study, for example, published in the science journal *Chemosphere*, identified eggs, cream, butter and cheese as the foods highest in POP contaminants.

Finally, in Spain scientists did high-resolution gas chromatography testing that involved several hundred persons and found “consumption of milk and other dairy products to be positively associated” with pesticide and PCB compounds that “lead to pancreatic cancer risk.”

If this had been a trial of evidence linking dairy consumption to health risks from pesticides and other contaminants, I know a jury would return a verdict of **Guilty** as charged.

Brian Clement, PhD, LN, Hippocrates Health Institute, September 27, 2019