

Assessment of a dioxin finding in mineral clay

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The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has assessed data on dioxins which were found in a product that is marketed as food supplement and which contains mineral clay. In contrast to many food and feed products, no legal maximum levels for dioxins in food supplements have been established either by the European Community or the national German government.

Dioxins are environmental contaminants which accumulate in the fatty tissue. The daily intake amount should thus be kept as low as possible.

Based on the general background exposure of the population, the additional intake of this dioxin-contaminated clay would lead to an exceedance of the tolerable weekly intake (TWI) established by the Scientific Committee on Food (SCF).

In the special case of dioxins BfR considers a limited exceedance of the tolerable weekly intake acceptable as long as the average intake over a longer period of time (such as one year) does not constitute an exceedance of the TWI. The occasional consumption of the mineral clay that was subject of this assessment is therefore not expected to result in any adverse health effects.

However, adverse health effects are possible for consumers who do ingest this dioxin-contaminated mineral clay for a longer period of time.

Generally, BfR finds that unnecessary and avoidable additional exposure cannot be tolerated, and thus concludes that dioxin-contaminated mineral clay should not be marketed.

The full version of this BfR Opinion is available in German on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/bewertung_eines_dioxinfundes_in_mineralerde.pdf