



- **What is Triclosan?**

Triclosan is an antibacterial and antifungal chemical agent used to stop the growth of bacteria, fungus and mildew. It is used in medical environments, cleaning products and paints, cosmetics and personal care products. Triclosan is also used as a preservative and can be found in plastic, rubber, textile, leather and paper products.

- **What we know about Triclosan:**

When rinsed off and washed down drains (from soaps, toothpastes and other cosmetic products) Triclosan can affect plants and animals.

New information about Triclosan in the environment has been presented to New Zealand's Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), but more data is needed to determine the scope and extent of the issue.

- **What we don't know about Triclosan:**

Current opinion from the European Union (EU) and Australia is there is no clear link between products containing Triclosan and increased antibacterial resistance.

Triclosan has not been proven to create, or contribute to, adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological or immune effects in people or animals. The European Chemicals Agency has asked for more information on this.

- **Triclosan use in New Zealand:**

The EPA sets maximum limits for Triclosan of 0.3% in cosmetics, toothpaste and mouthwashes. Triclosan approvals are set under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act.

Most products containing Triclosan are managed under Group Standards. These are a way of approving groups of substances similar in nature, type or use. For example, there are group standards governing the management of cosmetics, dental products cleaners, medicines and paints.

- **The EPA's role in approving Triclosan:**

The EPA's role is to oversee applications for the importation and manufacture of chemicals and hazardous substances under the HSNO Act. Any hazardous substance needs approval under the Act before it can be used in New Zealand.

The EPA sets approvals by taking a risk-management approach which aims to balance risks with benefits; it also involves evaluating and balancing the science and Māori perspectives in relation to

human health, New Zealand's unique environment, and our economy. Consideration is also given to the impact, good or bad, of a substance on native flora, fauna, insects, ground water systems, human health and Māori concerns.

- **Triclosan use in the United States of America (USA):**

In September 2016 the US Federal Drug Agency (FDA) determined there was insufficient data available to support manufacturers claiming their particular consumer antiseptic washes containing Triclosan were safer or more effective than those that did not. Those products are now considered to be misbranded in the USA.

The ruling only covers over-the-counter consumer antiseptic washes like hand or body washes. It does not extend to health care antiseptics, consumer antiseptic rubs (ie, products not rinsed off after use like hand or body washes), those identified as "first aid antiseptics", or antiseptics used by the food industry. Triclosan continues to be permitted in these products.

The FDA has proposed a set of conditions under which over-the-counter consumer antiseptics and health care antiseptics may generally be recognised as safe and effective. However, a final decision is yet to be announced.

- **Triclosan use in other jurisdictions**

European Union: Triclosan is not approved for use as a disinfectant in human hygiene products - 'product-type one biocide'. A biocide is defined in European legislation as a chemical substance intended to destroy, render harmless, or exert a controlling effect on any harmful organism. The decision was based on the "unacceptable risks" caused by Triclosan's toxic effects on organisms in surface waters, and its bio-accumulative effects down the food chain. With the other product-types already being phased out, there is currently no permitted biocidal use for Triclosan in the EU. Aside from its biocide use, Triclosan is mostly used in cosmetics. Currently the EU is conducting a substance evaluation under REACH legislation due to concerns relating to its PBT and endocrine-disrupting properties. EU cosmetics legislation sets maximum Triclosan concentrations of 0.3% for toothpaste, hand and body soaps, deodorants, face powders, and nail products, and 0.2% for mouthwashes.

Triclosan is prohibited in manufactured goods that come into contact with food (ie, plastics). However, it can be used in veterinary hygiene products.

Canada: Health Canada has set maximum limits for Triclosan of 0.03% for mouthwashes 1.0% in personal care products regulated as a drug, and 0.3% in other cosmetics/personal care products.

Japan: Japan has a limit of 0.1% in all cosmetic products.

Australia: the maximum allowable limit of Triclosan in cosmetics has been set at 0.3% in Australia.