

Harmful chemicals in French Food Contact Materials

From farms to storage, to processing and grocery shops, our food comes into contact with lots of different materials. Unfortunately, **those materials are allowed to contain harmful chemicals that can leach into the food we eat and the beverages we drink (1), putting our health at risk.**



What have studies shown?

Harmful chemicals, such as phthalates, bisphenols and fluorinated substances (PFAS) can be present in food contact materials and food packaging.

- A report on toxic mineral oils (MOAH) in food found **several food products from France had been contaminated with MOAH (2)**. Contamination of food with MOAH can occur via food contact materials.
- Analysis of disposable food packaging bought from shops and restaurants in France found **levels of total organic fluorine that indicate the presence of PFAS (3)**.

Chemicals in our bodies

We are constantly exposed to a cocktail of known and suspected harmful chemicals through air, water, food, consumer products and other routes. Food contact materials can contribute to our exposure to harmful chemicals.

- **10% of French teenagers** tested exceeded the human biomonitoring guidance value for **Bisphenol F (4)**.
- **24% of French teenagers** tested have a combined level of exposure to **PFOA, PFOS, PFNA and PFHxS** exceeding the EU Food Safety Authority's health-based guidance value (4).

What are Food Contact Materials (FCMs)?

Materials and products that come into contact with our food, such as storage containers, factory equipment, kitchen utensils, tableware, and food packaging.

91% of French citizens are worried about the impact of chemicals present in everyday products **on the environment (5)**.

88% of French citizens are worried about the impact of chemicals present in everyday products **on their health (5)**.

Some action has been taken... but not nearly enough

- Bisphenol A, the most common and widely used bisphenol, has been banned from use in most food contact materials in France since 2015 (6).
- In 2021, France published a draft decree that requires sellers to declare consumer products, including food contact materials, that contain suspected Endocrine Disruptors (7).

However, there is much more to be done in order to properly protect French and EU citizens from harmful chemicals in food contact materials.

Looking forwards

A revision of EU food contact material legislation is underway, presenting a key opportunity to act. We do not merely want to patch the loopholes that allow harmful chemicals in food contact materials. **We are calling for the legislation to be properly updated to ensure the protection of citizen's health, help support a circular economy free from harmful chemicals, and ensure harmful chemicals do not enter the environment. Visit toxicfreefoodpackaging.com for information on actions to take.**

1. Zimmerman et al, 2022. Implementing the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability: The case of food contact chemicals of concern.
2. Food Watch, 2021. Toxic mineral oil found in food products.
3. Straková, J., Schneider, J., Cingotti, N. et al., 2021. Throwaway Packaging, Forever Chemicals: European wide survey of PFAS.
4. HBM4EU, 2022. Final conference exhibition 'We live in a chemical world' – Exposure levels and exceedance values
5. European Union, 2020. Attitudes of Europeans towards the environment - France.

6. European Parliament, 2018. New rules on bisphenol A in food contact materials.
7. Chemical Watch, 2021. France to require sellers to declare EDCs in consumer products.

