

## Chemicals used in shampoos to get toxic label

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The federal government plans to add two silicon-based chemicals, which are found in shampoo, soap, antiperspirant and hundreds of other personal-care products, to its toxic chemicals list after tests showed they pose a danger to wildlife.

The substances, known as D4 and D5, "are not a concern for human health based on the amount of these substances that an individual would be exposed to through the use of various products, including personal care products," says a statement on Environment Canada's website.

However, tests found that because the substances are so prevalent -- they are also used to make industrial products, including textiles, paints and plastics -- they seep into the environment in large quantities, where they can harm fish and other aquatic organisms.

Therefore, the government will propose setting limits on how much of the chemical can be present in products, and how much can be released into the environment during the manufacturing process.

"This is the first step toward regulating these harmful chemicals," Aaron Freeman, policy director of Environmental Defence, said in a statement. "We urge the government to go the distance by getting these chemicals off the market."

The substances are added to shampoos and styling products to add softness and shine to hair. They make other products more malleable.

Fe de Leon, a researcher with the Canadian Environmental Law Association, said the substances are found within hundreds of common products.

"They are found in a number of products and certainly industrial applications," she told CTV Newsnet on Tuesday afternoon.

Besides the shampoos and deodorants, de Leon said they are also used in many building sealant products, lubricants, as well as many detergents.

"We're talking about hundreds of products, and certainly from the perspective of large uses, these are probably one of the largest types of chemicals that are used in huge quantities, not only in Canada but around the world," de Leon said.

According to Environmental Defence, at high doses, D4 has been linked to fertility problems and liver damage in animal tests, while both D4 and D5 have been linked to cancer.

De Leon said she feels Canadians should be concerned that D4 and D5 are included in so many readily-available products.

"The assessments that have been conducted by the government look at a very narrow scope of the problem," she said.

"These chemicals are found to be persistent, bioaccumulative and inherently toxic, which feels that these chemicals may find (their) way into the northern communities despite the fact that the

sources may not be there."

The chemicals have the ability to travel very long distances, de Leon said, and have been found in our sewage treatment plant effluents, landfills and even the Great Lakes.

"Certainly what we'd like to see is an approach by the government to promote a look at an alternative to some of these chemicals," she said.

As part of the process to include substances on the toxic list, the federal government has opened a 60-day comment period for industry representatives and other stakeholders.

The Silicones Environmental, Health and Safety Council, a silicone industry lobby group, says once the federal government reviews more scientific research on D4 and D5, it will deem them safe.

"The Minister of Environment has recommended listing D4 and D5 as possibly warranting environmental regulatory measures. No action has been taken based on this recommendation," the SEHSC said in a statement.

"If the recommendation is adopted, the Canadian government will factor in soon to be completed scientific studies further examining how the materials actually behave in the environment. We fully expect that these studies will continue to demonstrate that D4 and D5 are safe for the environment and that action is not needed."

The SEHSC argues that the United Kingdom's Environmental Agency and the European Union's European Chemicals Bureau are both waiting for further scientific study on the two chemicals before they decide if regulations are needed.

However, Environmental Defence says that beginning next year, the EU will require manufacturers to register the chemicals under a program designed to regulate potentially harmful substances.

The Canadian tests are part of a government review of about 200 substances that have been flagged since recent studies suggested they may have harmful effects on humans or wildlife.

Along with D4 and D5, Ottawa is set to enact new regulations to restrict the use of five other industrial chemicals, and prevent two of them from being used in cosmetics.