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Healthy Babies Bright Futures' Response to FDA's Newest Baby Food Letter

March 5, 2021: With its [Constituent Update and Letter to Industry issued today](#), FDA is responding to pressure from parents, Healthy Babies Bright Futures (HBBF), other advocacy organizations, and Congress calling for action to reduce babies' exposures to toxic heavy metals like lead and arsenic in baby food. [HBBF's 2019 baby food report](#) and the [subsequent Congressional investigation](#) were key to creating movement on this issue.

While the update and letter are vague, FDA is signaling its intent to take a series of actions to reduce children's exposures to toxic heavy metals: setting more action levels, reviewing current levels, finalizing a protective limit for arsenic in apple juice, publishing a draft protective limit for lead in juice, more inspections, issuing guidance, and increasing testing to better understand babies' exposures.

"The Congressional report laid out compelling new evidence that shows FDA's clear failure to protect babies from the toxic heavy metals in their food," says Charlotte Brody RN, National Director of Healthy Babies Bright Futures. "Millions of babies are exposed to these contaminants every day. It is time to step up and finally take clear action."

"The devil is in the details," says Jane Houlihan, Research Director at HBBF. "FDA has promised to share its plan in the coming weeks. For meaningful, significant exposure reductions, FDA must set enforceable health-based limits for toxic heavy metals in the foods that account for the greatest exposures, including rice-based foods and snacks, juices, infant cereals, and root vegetables."

We applaud FDA for its intention to ramp up its work to reduce babies' exposures to toxic heavy metals in foods. We urge the agency to do much more, not less, in the years ahead. There is no safe level of exposure to these metals - they can impair the developing brain at low levels. Every action FDA takes will help the youngest and most vulnerable among us.

ABOUT HEALTHY BABIES BRIGHT FUTURES: [Healthy Babies Bright Futures](#) (HBBF) is an alliance of scientists, nonprofit organizations and donors working to create and support initiatives that measurably reduce exposures to neurotoxic chemicals in the first one thousand days of development. Our efforts are inspired and supported by science and data, and designed to help restore the chance for a full life to children who would otherwise face brain-diminishing exposures to toxic chemicals beginning in utero.