

BABY FOOD FACTS

“Food for us comes from our relatives, whether they have wings or fins or roots. That is how we consider food. Food has a culture. It has a history. It has a story. It has relationships.” – Winona LaDuke, Ojibwe Nation, environmental activist

You have likely seen in the news warnings about toxic metals in baby food and rice cereal. Toxic metals such as lead, arsenic, cadmium, and mercury exist in the earth both naturally and unnaturally. The unnatural types of these metals come from building dust, burning trash, and car and truck exhaust. They are carried by wind, settle into farm soil, and then get absorbed by the farm’s crops that are then turned into baby food.



POSSIBLE HEALTH CONCERNS INCLUDE

- **Lead** can effect brain growth and learning.
- **Arsenic** can cause digestion issues and increase risk of cancer. It can also cause changes in the skin.
- **Cadmium** can damage lungs, kidneys, and bones and increase cancer risk.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN REDUCE EXPOSURE

Food known to have toxic metals

Rice cereals and rice flour
Rice milk
Brown rice syrup

Teething biscuits

Baby food made from vegetables grown in the ground like carrots and sweet potatoes

Juice, especially apple, pear, and grape

Alternatives that reduce exposure to toxic metals

- If you can, switch to rice-free foods, like oatmeal, quinoa, multi-grain cereal, polenta, and farro. Mix it up during the week.
- Rinsing rice before cooking can reduce the amount of arsenic in rice.

- Try frozen banana slices or cold peeled cucumber to help with teething pain
- Other ideas: a clean wet washcloth or spoon (watch for choking)

These plants are healthy and should still be eaten, but to reduce metals, mix it up with other fruits and veggies during the week. Every color of the rainbow in a week is a good guideline for baby food.

- Cold water and milk are safer options when it comes to toxic metals.
- Just like vegetables, mix it up throughout the week.