

**Food Advisory Committee
Contaminants and Natural Toxicants Subcommittee
June 8, 2004 Furan Meeting**

Introduction

These briefing materials have been prepared to provide background information on furan to the members of the Food Advisory Committee and the Contaminants and Natural Toxicants Subcommittee for the furan meeting that will be held on June 8, 2004. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss data needs pertaining to the evaluation of furan, a chemical formed during thermal treatment of food.

In the course of investigations to confirm the accuracy of a report that furan may be formed in food under certain circumstances, FDA scientists identified the substance furan in a number of foods that undergo heat treatment, such as canned and jarred foods. Furan is a colorless, volatile liquid used in some segments of the manufacturing industry. The presence of furan is a potential concern because, based on animal tests, furan is listed in the Department of Health and Human Services Report on Carcinogens and is considered possibly carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC).

Using a newly developed analytical method for determining furan in food, FDA has conducted an exploratory survey of food samples and found furan levels ranging from non-detectable (within the limits of detection of the method) to approximately 100 parts per billion (ppb). Jarred baby foods, canned infant formulas, and canned and jarred adult foods are among the foods in which FDA has found measurable furan.

In a Federal Register Notice of May 10, 2004, FDA requested data on the occurrence of furan in food, on sources of exposure to furan other than food, on mechanisms of formation of furan in food, and on the toxicology of furan, including mechanisms of toxicity. The notice summarized information currently available to FDA about the occurrence of furan in food, consumer exposure to furan, the mechanisms of furan formation in food, and the toxicology of furan, including the mechanism of toxicity. The notice also identified the areas in which additional data would be helpful to FDA in learning more about furan and evaluating the risk, if any, posed by the presence of furan in food.

The FDA seeks the Committee's input on the areas that the Agency has identified for requesting additional data that would be helpful for further evaluation of risk, if any, posed by the presence of furan in food.