



Nutrition Memo

PCC's Nutrition Education Team

Each month our nutrition education team highlights a food carried at PCC and discusses its nutritional benefits. The more knowledge you have about our products, the better you can provide great customer service!

Do you have a favorite food you would like to see featured in a future Nutrition Memo? Email your suggestions to nutrition@pccsea.com.

Infant Rice Cereal?

PCC has discontinued selling infant rice cereal, which was traditionally recommended as the ideal “first food” to give to babies. This advice is being questioned in light of arsenic levels.

Today, many pediatricians are recommending **avocados as a perfect first food for babies**. Avocados are easily mashed and are full of fiber and good fats. *Any vegetable, fruit, meat, or single grain can make a good baby food.*

Concerns about rice & arsenic

“Consumer Reports” scientists have released new guidelines (2014) to minimize exposure to arsenic in rice foods. The guidelines are particularly significant for pregnant and nursing women, and children.

Why is arsenic in rice?

- Rice is far more efficient in absorbing arsenic from the soil and water than any other crop: if rice is grown in arsenic-rich soil, the rice will “absorb” the arsenic.
- Arsenic was used for decades as a pesticide in non-organic food production and arsenic is also used as a feed additive in non-organic poultry and pork.

Who is most at risk?

- **Infants, toddlers, children** and pregnant (and nursing) women. Gluten-free shoppers, because most GF products are made with rice.
- Consumers of all rice products including rice pasta, rice cakes, and rice milk

How can shoppers reduce their arsenic exposure from rice?

- Rinse raw rice, cook with extra water (6c. water per 1c. rice), and drain (like the pasta method) after cooking. This can reduce the arsenic by 30%.
- California-grown rices (Lundberg), especially sushi and basmati rice have some of the lowest levels, and **white rice** contains much less arsenic than brown rice.
- Diversify your diet. Incorporate low arsenic whole grains such as amaranth, millet, and quinoa; as well as starchy vegetables and beans, rather than relying on rice.
- Ask your health provider about having your arsenic levels tested. Meet with a dietitian to discuss strategies to diversify your diet.

How Much Rice is OK to eat? (according to Consumer’s Union)

- Adults can safely eat **2 servings/week**; children can eat just 1 serving/week
(Serving = ¼ cup of dry rice / ½ cup cooked rice)
- **Rice milk** should not be given to any **children younger than 5**.
- Adults can safely eat up to 4 servings/week of CA-grown sushi and basmati rice, which contain the lowest levels of arsenic.

Search online for “Consumer Reports arsenic in food” for more information