

Super-Heated High Carbo Foods Safe As Part Of Balanced Diet

CHICAGO - Consumers do not need to fear acrylamide in high-heated, high carbohydrate foods as long as they maintain a well-balanced diet, according to the international, not-for-profit scientific society Institute of Food Technologists.

Because more research is needed, scientific experts here and abroad are moving quickly to learn as much as possible about foods found to contain acrylamide, a known carcinogen when exposed to laboratory animals in large quantities.

Discovered only recently in varying levels in exceedingly popular high-carbohydrate foods cooked at high temperatures such as fried potatoes, potato chips and breads, acrylamide was previously detected as a by-product of some water treatment systems.

IFT food science expert Carl Winter, a professor at the University of California at Davis, advises careful study of the acrylamide connection to food.

“The most important thing is not the presence or absence of any type of ingredient, but how much is there,” says Winter. It is important to note, he says, that “There will always be some risks associated with eating any foods.”

IFT food science expert Mary Ellen Camire, a professor of food science and human nutrition at the University of Maine, contends that the immense nutritional benefits of grains and potatoes offset any minuscule contaminants they may also contain.

“We eat a lot of unusual chemicals but that’s what food is, a complex mixture of chemicals,” says Camire. “What’s important is getting a balance of what’s best.”

IFT recognizes the important areas for study include: dietary exposure levels; toxicological and metabolic consequences; learning how acrylamide is formed from natural components, and other areas.

Until conclusions can be properly formulated, IFT recommends following nutritional guidelines with a balanced diet that can include these foods in moderation.

Founded in 1939, the Institute of Food Technologists is a not-for-profit scientific society with 27,000 members working in food science, technology and related professions in industry, academia and government. As the society for food science and technology, IFT brings sound science to the public discussion of food issues. For more on IFT, see www.ift.org.

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