

PFOS and PFOA linked to low birth weight

A U.S. study says exposure to perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoate (PFOA) in the womb is linked to low birth weight and head circumference.

PFOS and PFOA are polyfluoroalkyl compounds (PFCs) used as protective coating on food-contact packaging, textiles and carpets, and in the manufacturing of insecticides and other industrial products.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health analyzed nearly 300 umbilical cord blood samples and found small decreases in head circumference and body weight in association with concentrations of PFOS and PFOA among infants born vaginally.

"These small, but significant, differences in head circumference and body weight provide the first evidence for a possible association between exposures to PFOS and PFOA and fetal growth," lead author Benjamin Apelberg said Friday in a release. "However, the differences are small and their impact on health is uncertain."

PFOA was detected in all the samples and PFOS in all but two of the samples. The concentrations for both compounds were lower than those typically detected in adults in the United States, and lower than those known to cause tumors and developmental problems in laboratory animals, the report said.

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