

Prop 65 FAQs

Q: What is Prop 65?

A: Proposition 65 is a California law that requires a "clear and reasonable warning" to consumers for products that contain chemicals known to the State of California to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm.

Q: Why am I being warned about exposure to a harmful chemical in my Girl Scout food product?

A: This warning is required to comply with California Proposition 65 which requires a warning for any chemical occurring in a product that is included on the California Proposition 65 list.

Q: Why would you put a chemical in food that is on the list?

A: With few exceptions, the chemicals in food that appear on the Proposition 65 list are not intentionally added to the food. They are picked up from the soil or are formed during cooking or other processes.

Q: What is acrylamide?

A: Acrylamide is a chemical that has a number of industrial uses, the most prominent being in the manufacture of polymers. For more information please see <https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals/acrylamide>

Q: So how does acrylamide get into food?

A: The presence of acrylamide in food was discovered in 2002. It is formed by the reaction of naturally occurring sugars and a particular amino acid when food is cooked at higher temperatures, such as when baked, roasted, or fried. For more information please see <https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/chemicals/acrylamide>

Q: How can the FDA allow products with a known carcinogen to be sold as food?

A: This is a very complicated subject and determining what is and is not a carcinogen is an extremely complex issue. In the case of acrylamide it is classed as a "probable carcinogen" by the International Agency on Cancer Research. The role of acrylamide as a potential carcinogen in food is even less well defined.

The American Cancer Society describes the current state of knowledge regarding the cancer risk of acrylamide in food this way:

While the evidence from human studies so far is somewhat reassuring, more studies are needed to determine if acrylamide raises cancer risk in people. The American Cancer Society supports the call by federal and international agencies for continued evaluation of how acrylamide is formed, its health risks, and how its presence in food can be reduced or removed. (for more information see <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/acrylamide.html>)

More information regarding the FDA's position on acrylamide can be found at

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/ChemicalContaminants/ucm053569.html>

Q: This seems very contradictory, you are saying that California says acrylamide causes cancer but other regulators and scientist say it doesn't. What should I make of that?

A: Proposition 65 includes a very large safety factor when determining what chemicals are included on the Proposition 65 list. Given the difficulty of determining what is a carcinogen and the extremely large safety factors used by California there is often a great deal of controversy regarding chemicals added to the Proposition 65 list. The purpose of Proposition 65 is to alert consumers to potential risk and allow them to make an informed decision regarding the products they use. We are providing this information to aid you in understanding the issue and risk, not to dispute the law in California.

Q: You have talked about acrylamide potentially causing cancer but the warning also says it could cause birth defects or reproductive harm. What about that?

A: We have added the reproductive harm statement due to technical reasons associated with Proposition 65. To the best of our knowledge the level of acrylamide in these products do not present a risk of reproductive harm. The Proposition 65 fact sheet on acrylamide points out the levels found in food are well below levels thought to cause reproductive harm. For the full fact sheet see: <https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/fact-sheets/acrylamide>

Q: Your warning says "may expose you to chemicals including acrylamide" what other cancer causing or reproductive harming chemicals are in the products?

A: To the best of our knowledge there are not other chemicals in these products that would present a risk. The products meet all FDA regulations. However Proposition 65 only requires one chemical be mentioned in the warning statement. We have made it a more general warning in case other chemicals are discovered in the future that might fall under Proposition 65 warning requirements.

Q: Where can I go to find more information on Prop 65?

A: The website for Prop 65 is <https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/>.

Q: Where will the warning be placed?

A: You will see the warning for some/all Girl Scout nut or candy products on girl order cards and the online website (for direct ship and girl delivered orders) sold in the state of California.

Q: What should we do as a Consumer?

A: We completely understand your concerns. Girl Scouts cannot advise you on the safety of these products. We trust our licensed vendors to offer the best-tasting and highest quality products that they have been producing and supplying to Girl Scouts for over 20 years.

Q: What should we do as a troop?

A: Refer any parents/consumers to the California prop 65 website as noted above and on the girl order card and allow them to make their own decisions.

Q: How does a Girl Scout explain this to a consumer?

A: The information for Prop 65 is listed at the end of the statement on the girl order card. We should allow the consumer to make their own decisions.