

FARM & FOOD

Glyphosate in my cereal?

What is glyphosate?

It is a herbicide also known by the trade name Roundup that is commonly used on farms and lawns to control weeds.

Should I be concerned about glyphosate in my cereal?

No major international regulatory body considers glyphosate a health risk. The International Agency for Research on Cancer considers a risk to measure the probability that a health problem could occur, taking into account the level of exposure.

Science is getting better at detecting smaller quantities, such as one part per billion which is equivalent to one second in 32 years. The fact we can detect glyphosate at parts per billion has zero significance to health. For example, it would not be possible for a person to eat enough bread, drink enough beer or eat enough oatmeal in a day to come close to the acceptable daily intake of glyphosate. In the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets safety standards for chemicals used on farms.

The EPA conducts extensive safety tests, which are used to set the maximum level of chemical residues that food can contain and still be safe. On top of that, the EPA sets a safety margin by setting allowable residues at 100 to 1,000 times lower than the level that is considered hazardous.

Why do farmers use glyphosate?

Farmers use glyphosate to control weeds in a sustainable way. In years past farmers relied on tillage to control weeds but this led to extensive soil loss by wind and water erosion. No-till agriculture using herbicides to control weeds helps improve the organic content of the soil as well as help preserve the soil for future generations.



Talk

Glyphosate is low toxicity and degrades completely into non-toxic compounds. This is not the case for some of the older herbicides that glyphosate replaced. Because glyphosate is more effective than most other herbicides it allows the farmer to use less in the production cycle.

Glyphosate Facts

- Glyphosate was subject to rigorous scientific review when it was first registered and has been re-evaluated multiple times since then. Health and environmental risks are considered acceptable if there is reasonable certainty that no harm to human health, future generations or the environment will result from exposure to or use of the pesticide, based on its conditions or proposed conditions of registration.
- The presence trace amounts of herbicides in food, like glyphosate that have passed rigorous scientific view, is not significant enough to pose a risk to the public.
- Glyphosate is used to control weeds and it has been extensively tested for safety.
- Glyphosate has been detected in very small amounts in foods. Those trace amounts are below the amount determined to be safe by regulatory bodies and do not pose a health risk. ■

Sources: Best Food Facts; Wayne Parrott, PhD, William Vencill, PhD, Plant Breeding & Genomics, University of Georgia; Robert Wager, biochemistry and molecular biology, Vancouver Island University.

Glyphosate in Food

| Amount allowed in grains by EPA | 30 ppm |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Cheerios | 1.125 ppm |
| Honey Nut Cheerios | 0.670 ppm |
| Wheaties | 0.0312 ppm |
| Trix | 0.0099 ppm |
| Gluten Free Bunny | 0.05513 ppm |
| Amount allowed in corn by EPA | 0.1 ppm |
| Cornflakes | 0.0789 ppm |