



# **Duckworth Leads Colleagues In Urging FDA To Act Swiftly To Reduce High Levels Of Toxic Heavy Metals In Baby Foods**

January 30 2023 10:34 AM

WASHINGTON D.C. After the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued draft guidance to reduce levels of lead in baby food earlier this week, today U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), U.S. Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08) and U.S. Representative Tony Cárdenas (D-CA-29) are once again urging FDA to take quick and significant action to reduce high levels of toxic heavy metals—including lead, arsenic, mercury and cadmium—in baby food and help ensure that the baby food we provide our nation’s infants and young children is safe and healthy. While this draft guidance is welcome progress, it was announced much later than expected according to FDA’s own “Closer to Zero” initiative, the FDA’s plan to reduce high levels of toxic heavy metals in baby food, which stated that this draft guidance would be issued in April of last year. The lawmakers’ letter follows up on their June 2022 [letter](#) to FDA urging for better industry oversight and regulation of baby food.



In their letter to the agency, the lawmakers wrote: “While we believe issuing this draft guidance is an important step forward, more must be done to ensure the safety of foods consumed by babies and young children. Despite the establishment of the *Closer to Zero* initiative and FDA’s additional actions to regulate the presence of toxic heavy metals in baby foods, it appears that unacceptable levels of toxic heavy metals persist in these foods.”

In conclusion, the lawmakers requested FDA fully and expeditiously carry out its Closer to Zero initiative, which set timelines for regulating toxic heavy metals in baby foods. They wrote: “It is deeply concerning that high levels of toxic heavy metals remain in our Nation’s manufactured baby foods. Given the severity of the potential dangers posed by this, we urge FDA to expeditiously finalize guidance documents for industry on proposed action levels for lead in foods consumed by babies and children under the age of two.”

In 2021, all four lawmakers [introduced](#) the bicameral *Baby Food Safety Act of 2021*, legislation that sought to dramatically reduce toxic heavy metals in baby food, educate parents about the risks and invest in cutting edge farming technology to reduce any economic barriers to making baby food safe for consumption.

Duckworth has been a fierce advocate for families, working to help make sure parents have access to safe, healthy baby food and infant formula. In the past two fiscal year appropriations cycles, Duckworth successfully led her colleagues to secure \$20 million in funding in support of the Closer to Zero initiative.

Duckworth also helped introduce the *Access to Baby Formula Act*, which was [signed into law](#). The legislation worked to address the infant formula shortage for families who rely on WIC and empowered the U.S. Department of Agriculture with the authority needed to respond to a crisis quicker and more efficiently, such as the infant formula shortage.

A full copy of the letter is available [here](#).