

Rep. Markey to FDA: Why are lindane shampoos still allowed?

Jun 7, 2012 by Pesticide Action Network



Lice shampoos containing lindane continue to be allowed in the U.S., despite being slated for a global ban due to the organochlorine pesticide's persistence and toxicity. Last week, Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) [urged the Obama Administration](#) to pull these products from the U.S. market once and for all.

In 2009, more than 160 nations agreed to ban the agricultural uses of lindane, and to [phase out pharmaceutical uses](#) around the world by 2014. Lindane shampoos and lotions have been [banned in California](#) since 2002, and several other states have moved to severely restrict the use of these products.

Rep. Markey released a [press statement](#) outlining his concern:

In the case of lindane, the cure is worse than disease. There is not a nit of scientific evidence to support the FDA's decision to continue to allow the use of this toxic chemical for treatment used predominantly on children.

Not only is evidence of the harmful health and environmental effects of lindane strong, studies have shown it is one of the [least effective lice control](#) products on the market. Yet the U.S. distributor of lindane shampoos and lotions, Wockhardt USA, continues to [aggressively promote its products](#) and resist any restrictions.

FDA slow to act

Rep. Markey [asked the Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) to respond to a number of specific questions, including:

- Why is this compound still allowed for use on children even after FDA noted that lindane is especially harmful to this segment of the population?
- Has FDA taken into consideration the long-term chronic impacts that lindane exposure may have on children?
- Has FDA evaluated the increased resistance that head lice and scabies have developed to lindane treatment?

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Published on Pesticide Action Network (<http://www.panna.org>)

- If FDA determined that approval of lindane as a treatment for head lice and scabies was no longer warranted because of safety and efficacy concerns, what immediate actions could FDA take to halt the use of lindane and to ensure the public is protected from this dangerous chemical?

PAN applauds Markey's efforts to press for action on lindane, and also the long-time efforts of our colleagues at the [National Pediculosis Association](#) to highlight the harmful health effects of lindane and promote the adoption of safer alternatives.

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