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MADIGAN ALERTS PARENTS, CAREGIVERS TO ARSENIC IN INFANT RICE CEREALS***Attorney General Urges FDA to Adopt Standards, Limit Levels of Arsenic in Food***

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan warned parents and caregivers of the presence of arsenic in infant rice cereals following research released today by her office in conjunction with a national report by Consumer Reports.

Madigan said the results of tests performed for her office are consistent with the national findings, which report troubling levels of inorganic – or toxic – arsenic in samples of infant rice cereals.

Based on these findings, Madigan today sent a letter to the FDA, calling on the agency to move quickly to adopt national standards to limit inorganic arsenic in food, particularly in baby food. The Attorney General also sent a letter to manufacturers of the products tested, calling on them to immediately take steps to reduce inorganic arsenic in their products and to work with the FDA to adopt national standards for arsenic in food.

Madigan said the findings raise serious concerns about the amount of arsenic being consumed by infants and young children. Madigan urged parents and caregivers to moderate servings of rice in their children’s diet using recommendations issued by Consumer Reports. For example, parents are advised to limit infant’s consumption of rice cereals to one serving per day. A complete list of those recommendations can be found at www.consumerreports.org/cro/arsenicinfood.

“First and foremost, I want to warn parents that every rice cereal product we tested contained arsenic. These results are shocking because rice cereal is often a baby’s first solid food,” Madigan said. “Parents and caregivers should moderate the amount of rice products they feed their children, while the FDA sets standards to limit this known carcinogen in our food.”

Arsenic is a heavy metal found in soil and bedrock that takes on two forms – organic and inorganic. Inorganic arsenic is considered a toxic chemical and a known carcinogen. The toxin is most often used for industrial and agricultural uses, particularly as a pesticide.

Madigan’s office provided rice products to laboratories for arsenic testing in light of reports last year conducted by Consumer Reports that showed the presence of arsenic in apple juice and tests conducted by researchers at Dartmouth that detected arsenic in brown rice syrup.

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