

Risk communication – how to develop new tailored communication tools

03.11.2022, Berlin

Dr. Suzan Fiack

Unit Press and Public Relations

Department Risk Communication

SCIENCE: Our strategic approach in press and public relations at the BfR



Scientific knowledge (Risk Assessment)

Context (Perception, Social Media and Media Analysis)

Information (Messages, Target Audience)

Explanation (Language, Visualisation)

Networking (Stakeholders, Dialogue)

Circulation (Dissemination, Channels)

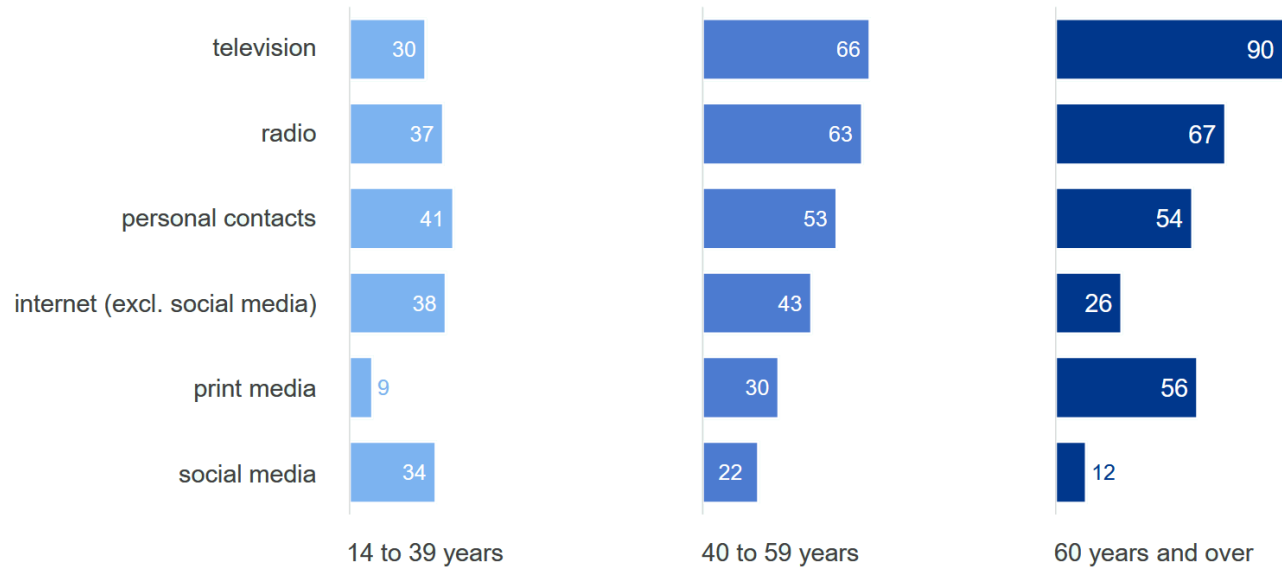
Evaluation (Statistics, Surveys, Feedback)

Why do we need social media and visual communication tools?



Source: Pixabay

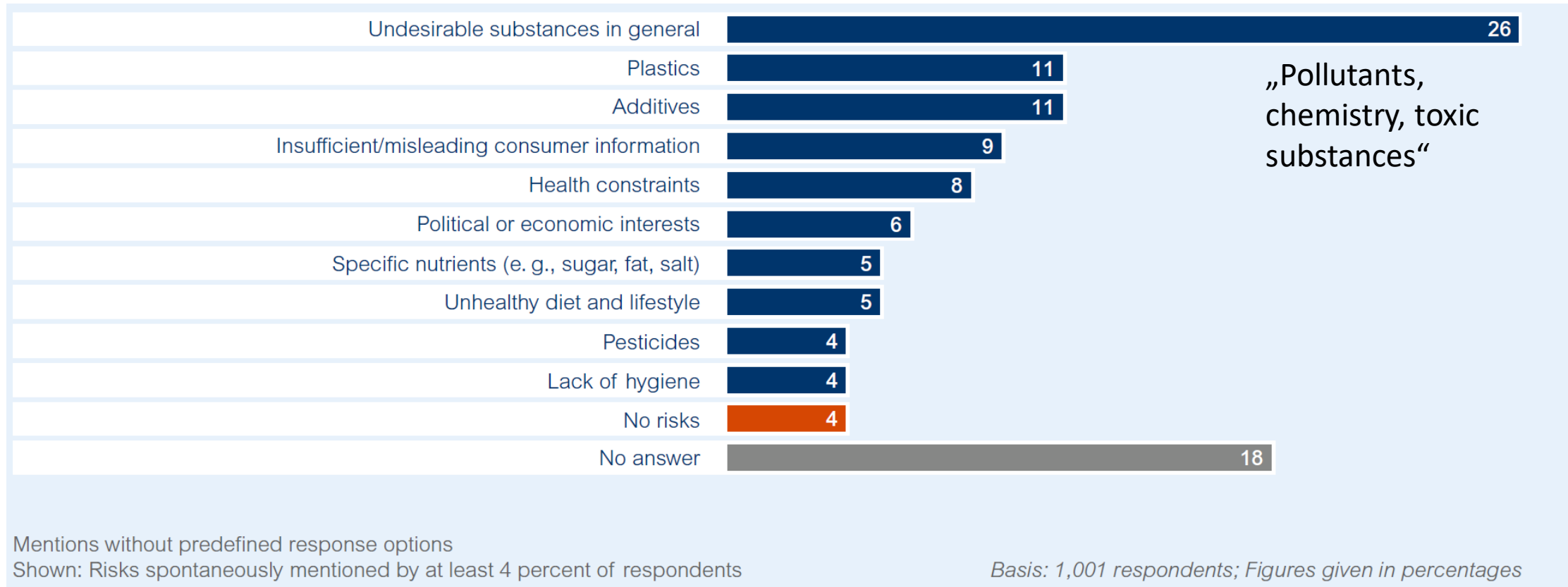
How often do you use the following information channels to inform yourself about what is happening with the novel coronavirus?



Source: BfR Corona Monitor. October 2020

Response options: 'daily', 'several times a week', 'once a week', 'less than once a week', 'never' – Shown: response category 'daily'

In your opinion, what are the biggest health risks for consumers?



Source: BfR Consumer Monitor, a representative population survey 08/2022

Why do we need social media and visual communication tools?

- We can reach new target audiences
- Visualisation can communicate emotions and take risk perception into account
- Visualisation can explain complex scientific issues
- A combination of verbal and graphic risk communication can reduce false estimations and promote risk-literate decisions
(Research cooperation between the BfR and Harding Center for Risk Literacy)
-

Before



Source: BfR Annual Report 2009

After



Source: BfR2GO 1/2018

- Online-PDF
- E-Paper
- App
- Print

Before

A vegan diet is associated with possible health risks – above all in the case of infants, small children and children, who have high-level requirements for nutrient supply during their growth phase.

Vegan diet – a case for risk communication?

A growing number of people are making the choice to adopt a vegan diet and therefore to refrain from consuming all foods of animal origin. The results of representative surveys conducted in 2014 and 2015 indicate that some 950,000 people in Germany are vegans. Some studies state that a vegan diet has positive effects on overall health: it is said to keep cholesterol levels low and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases as well as cancer.

Nevertheless, a vegan diet is associated with possible health risks – above all in the case of infants, small children and children, who have high-level requirements for nutrient supply during their growth phase. One of the main problems with a vegan diet is a lack of vitamin B₁₂, iron, calcium, iodine and zinc as well as long-chain Omega 3 fatty acids.



It was in response to the prevailing scientific uncertainty regarding the pros and cons of a vegan diet that the BfR decided to address this issue. Target-group specific risk communication strategies were developed based on the individual and social influencing factors that play a key role in the motivation to adopt and maintain a vegan diet. To this end, focus group interviews were conducted with a total of 42 vegans in different age groups. This qualitative survey method documented underlying or latent attitudes, values and opinions that only come to the surface if an individual is encouraged to talk about them in a group environment.

Although the recorded survey data are not representative due to the limited number of cases, they allow some general conclusions based on the, in some cases very pronounced deviations from the

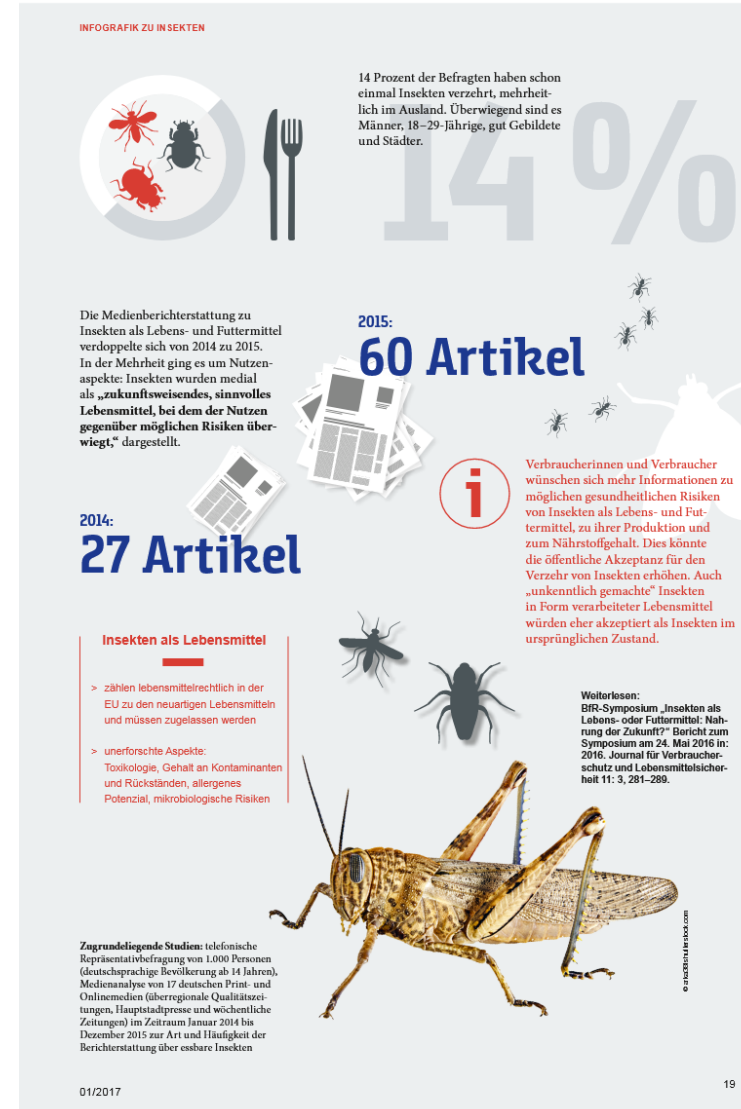
Vegans have above-average educational qualifications and a sound knowledge of nutrition. 40 of the 42 participants in the focus groups were aware that a vegan diet can lead to a deficiency of vitamin B₁₂, and the overwhelming majority of them therefore supplement this vitamin on a regular basis. Two in three of the vegans previously already followed vegetarian diets. This means that vegetarianism promotes the decision to adopt a vegan diet – by virtue of the fact that vegetarians have already fundamentally changed their diet and have the role of a “food outsider”. It is generally the case that reporting in the media is a major factor in the decision to switch to a diet free of animal products. For the majority of respondents, films on the inhumane rearing of animals were the most important trigger for the change of diet. The majority of vegans are convinced that humans do not have the right to kill animals or cause them to suffer without necessity. As the production of animal products can entail suffering on the part of the animal, they reject this practice on principle. Human rights such as freedom and inviolability are “transferred” to the animals. The published categorisation of vegans into ethical, health and eco vegans was not confirmed. Health-related motives are rarely mentioned and are generally more of a welcome side-effect. This means that it is not possible to determine standardised attitude patterns with regard to the decision in favour of a vegan diet.

Even a pregnancy does not generally cause vegans to (temporarily) consume animal products once again. On the contrary: some participants decided to adopt a vegan diet precisely because they became pregnant. Children are also given a vegan diet.

The findings show that there is a need for risk communication to become active, and that there is a particular need for wide-ranging information about possible nutrient deficiency due to a vegan diet during pregnancy and in the case of infants and small children. Risk communication is always more successful if it picks up on the convictions that already exist in the target group. Nearly

Source: BfR Annual Report 2009

After



Source: BfR2GO 1/2017

Before

VERBRAUCHERINFO

Risiko Vergiftungsunfälle bei Kindern



2017



After



Vergiftungsunfälle bei Kindern

Im Notfall bin ich vorbereitet.

In der kostenlosen App des BfR finden Sie Informationen zur Vorbeugung von Vergiftungsunfällen bei Kindern und zu Erste-Hilfe-Maßnahmen. Alle Hinweise zu Gefahrenstoffen im Haushalt sind auch ohne Internetzugang abrufbar. Im Notfall kann direkt aus der App ein Giftinformationszentrum angerufen werden.

Jetzt für Android & iOS downloaden!

@BfR

Source: BfR Brochure Poisoning Accidents Among Children 2018

Before

Definition of a risk

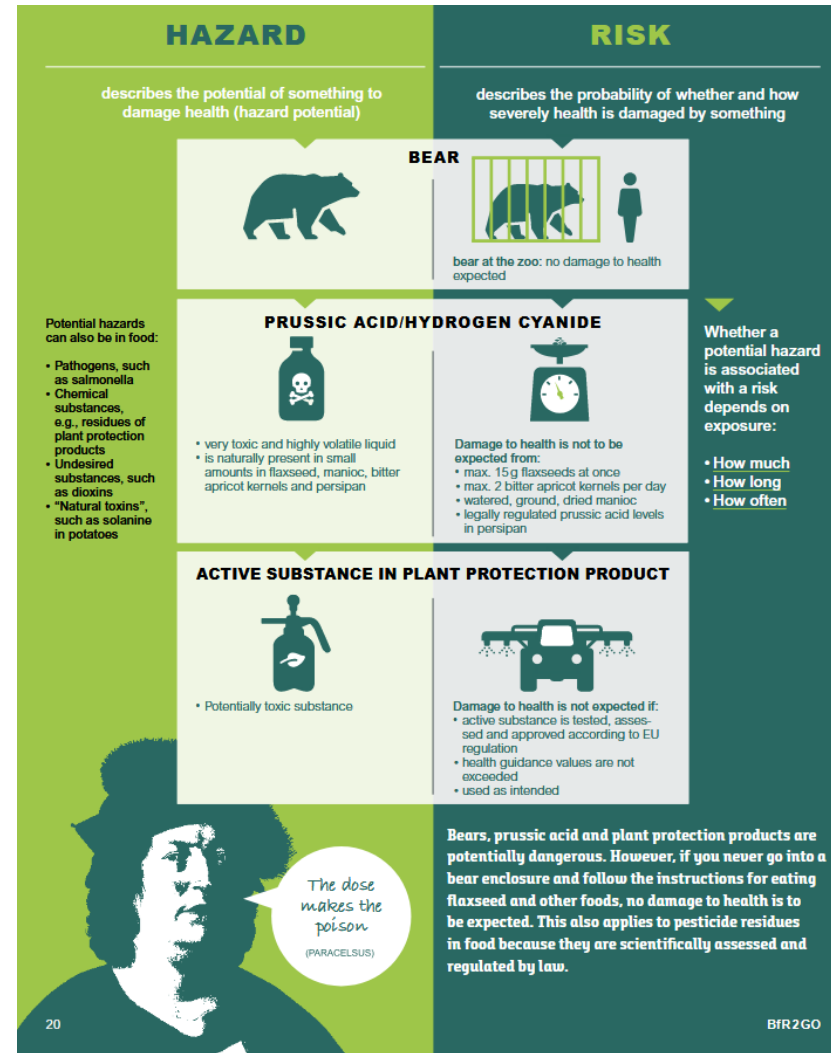
In scientific terms the “risk” characterises the scale of possible damage and the probability that it will occur.

A risk results from the hazard presented by a substance or a germ and the frequency and the scale on which consumers come into contact with it.

Under certain circumstances almost all substances or germs can harm health and, therefore, develop into a risk. If this hazard potential is identified early on, steps can be taken to prevent or reduce the risk.

BfR-Website/Risk assessment

After



Source: BfR2GO 1/2021

Before

Health assessment of individual measurements of fipronil levels detected in foods of animal origin in Belgium

In the case of fipronil, calculations were performed with the highest measured value of the levels of fipronil in eggs (1.2 mg fipronil per kg eggs) as the **worst case**.

On the basis of this level and the health reference values, the BfR arrives at the conclusion that under consideration of European consumption data, **the ARfD for children is exceeded by chicken eggs**.

This **does not necessarily mean** that the consumption of chicken eggs poses a concrete health risk, but it indicates that, in line with the current level of available knowledge, **a health risk is possible for children** with the required margin of safety after consuming these contaminated chicken eggs.

BfR Opinion No. 016/2017 of 30 July 2017

After

By way of example, using the highest level measured to date in Belgium of 1.2 mg of fipronil per kg of eggs, purely mathematically a child with a body weight of 16.5 kg could eat 1.7 eggs (each with an individual weight of 70 g) and an **adult** with a body weight of 65 kg

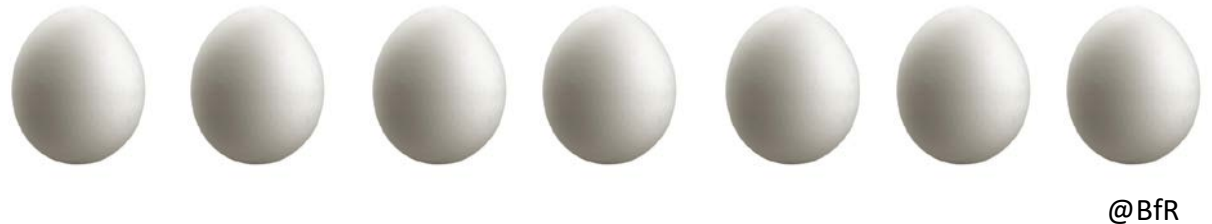
7 eggs

in one day (once only or within 24 hours) without exceeding the health-based limit value expressed as the acute reference dose (ARfD).

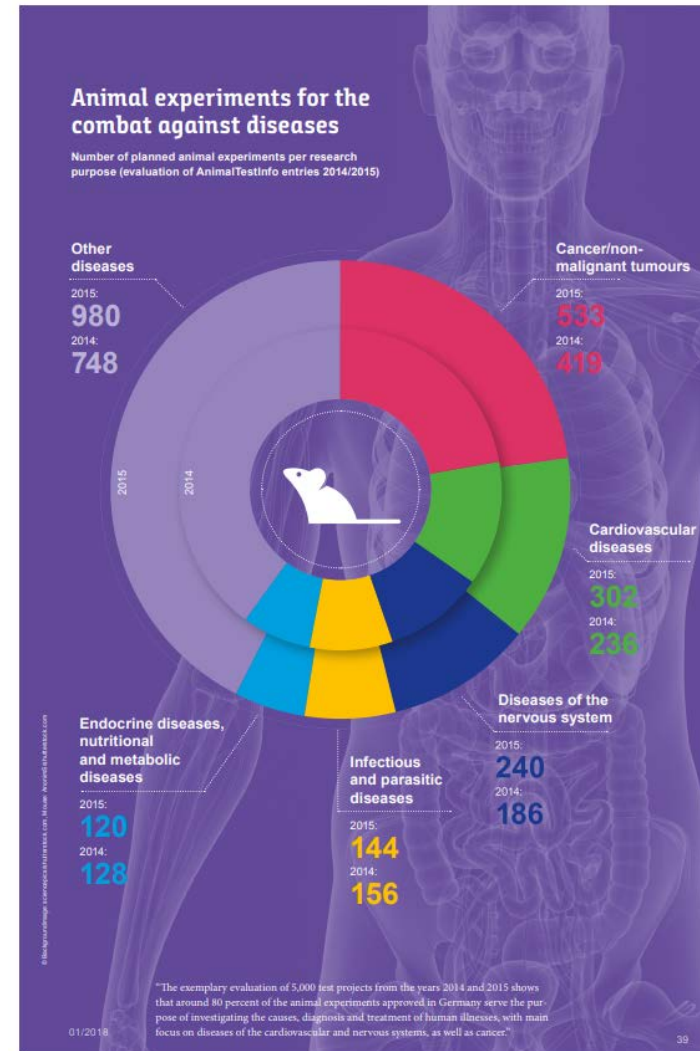
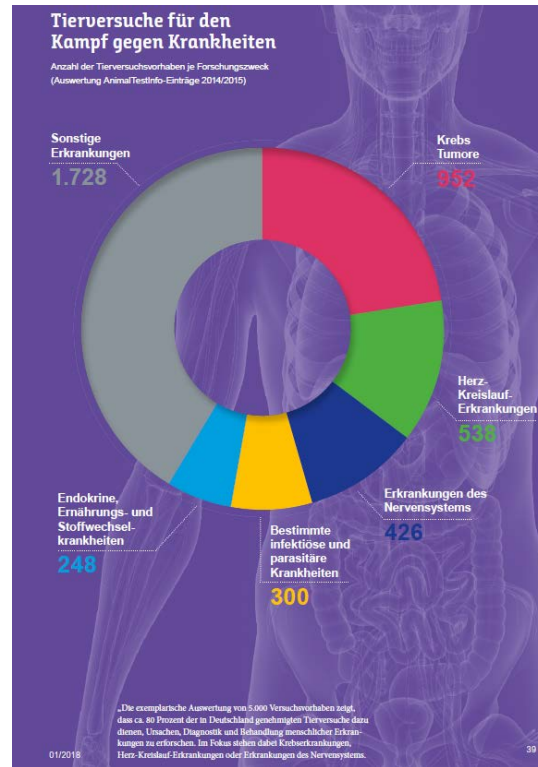
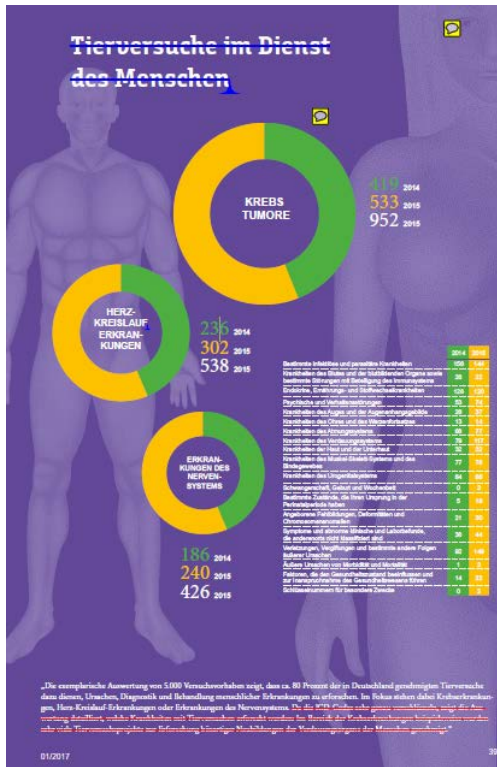
Accordingly, a child with a body weight of 10 kg, which corresponds with an age of approximately one year, can eat

1 egg

per day (once only or within 24 hours) without exceeding the health-based limit value expressed as the acute reference dose (ARfD).



How to develop new tailored communication tools....



It is a process.

Source: BfR2GO 1/2017

Risk communication with cartoon characters - Correct cooling

Order in the refrigerator



Defrosting in the refrigerator







Minced meat in the refrigerator



@BfR

Unit Visual Communications in cooperation with Claudio Canales

Facts and figures at BfR

	Platform	Followers <small>(as of 30/09/2022)</small>
	Twitter @bfrde, @bfren, @bf3R_centre	13.323 (+ % 5*)
	Instagram	1.565 (+ 25 %*)
	LinkedIn	5.045 (+ 25 %*)
	Mastodon	297 **

* Development in comparison to 31/12/2021

** Accession in August 2022

- Platform- and target group-specific address
- References to current press releases, opinions, events
- Campaigns, e.g. on seasonal topics
- Proximity and trust through insights, e.g. video reports
- Networking with related institutions
- Positioning as attractive employer

Selected new activities: Twitter

Promoting our didactic plant labyrinth

BfR | Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung @BfRde · 2. Sep. ...

Über 1,5 km erstreckt sich unser interaktiver Lehrpfad im BfR-Nektar-Hektar. Dort erwarten Sie u.a. tolle Mitmach-Stationen, eine Strohburg & eine Imkerstation (& am Ziel winkt eine kleine Überraschung).

Für Wegbeschreibung & Gruppenführungen hier entlang: bfr-akademie.de/deutsch/nektar...



Das interaktive Pflanzenlabyrinth des BfR
ALT Hirsdorfer Weg 1, 12277 Berlin-Marienfelde



BfR | Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung @BfRde · 20. Sep. ...

Wollen Sie mit Ihrer **#Kitagruppe** oder **#Schulklasse** eine Führung durch unser **#Pflanzenlabyrinth** machen? Besonders für Kinder ist der Inhalt verständlich & ansprechend aufbereitet. Mit allen Sinnen lernen sie Fakten rund um die Biene.

bfr-akademie.de/media/wysiwyg/...


Wir sind bereit 📍 📍



BfR | Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung @bfrde · 27. Sep. ...

Unser **#Pflanzenlabyrinth** geht in seine letzte Woche und wir fahren nochmal alles auf. Ab dem heutigen Dienstag bis Freitag (30.09.) öffnet unser BfR-Nektar-Hektar für alle Interessierten und bietet Wissenswertes rund um die **#Biene**.

So kommen Sie hin: bfr-akademie.de/deutsch/nektar...



Selected new activities: Videos on Instagram



Alle auf dem falschen Dampfer?

E-Zigaretten sind beliebt wie nie zuvor - aber sind sie auch gesünder als klassische Tabakwaren?

Dr. Elke Pieper
Gesundheitliche Risiken von Aromen in E-Zigaretten



@BfR

Selected new activities: Mastodon

- (Privacy compliant) microblogging service
- Recommended by the German federal data protection officer
- Approx. 5 million users worldwide
- Accession in August 2022 as one of the first German federal institutions

 BfR 🌐 19. Okt.
@bfr@social.bund.de

📌 Save the Date: Zu unserem 20. Jubiläum veranstalten wir das zweitägige internationale Symposium „Ein Stoff – eine Bewertung? Die nächsten 20 Jahre“.

Wann & Wo: 03.-04.11.2022 im Humboldt Carré in [#Berlin](#)

Programm & Anmeldung (zur kostenfreien Teilnahme): bfr-akademie.de/deutsch/verans...



Humboldt Carré
Behrenstraße 42, 10117 Berlin 

🔄 1 📧 ★ 📌 ...

Social media and press monitoring

- Since 01/2022: Social media and press monitoring by an external service provider
- Screening of social media, print and online sources for mentions of the BfR and thematically relevant articles
- Daily media reports + monthly evaluations of the activities of the BfR social media channels



Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung

Überblick und Auswertung der Social-Media-Kanäle des BfR für den Monat September 2022

Die Beiträge des Medienpiegels sind nur für den internen Gebrauch bestimmt.
Eine Weitergabe an Dritte sowie an weitere Kolleginnen und Kollegen ist unzulässig.

Thank you

Wiebke Berndt
Gaby-Fleur Böl
Jessica Ebelt
Anne Hermann
Torsten Herold
Mark Lohmann
Abteilung Risikokommunikation



Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (BfR)
Berlin

Dr. Suzan Fiack
T +49 30 18412-22300
suzan.fiack@bfr.bund.de

Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung
bfr.bund.de



Identify Risks –
Protect Health

Verbraucherschutz zum Mitnehmen
**BfR2GO – das Wissenschafts-
magazin des BfR**

bfr.bund.de/de/wissenschaftsmagazin_bfr2go.html

Follow us

