



Health risk due to additives in tobacco and liquids

Scientific studies indicate the possibility of adverse health effects when certain components of tobacco for smoking are inhaled. This was the result of the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) health assessment for the substances diacetyl (2,3-butandione), 2,3-pentandione, 2,3-hexandione and 2,3-heptandione as well as for guar gum and sorbitol. Accordingly, the use of cannabidiol in cigarette tobacco and in liquids for e-cigarettes can also give the impression of a supposed health benefit. The European Tobacco Products Directive provides for a ban in such circumstances. The German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture had tasked the BfR with examining whether there are further scientific indications of substances with a health risk when inhaled. Under the German Tobacco Products Regulation, some substances with properties advertised in this way are already banned.

More information:
BfR Opinion No. 021/2021 of 2 July 2021 (in German)

'UFI' can save lives in an emergency

Chemical products, such as detergents, often contain ingredients that are hazardous to health. The first point of contact in case of an accident is the emergency medical services or a poison centre. Often, however, the product in question cannot be clearly identified. The new 'UFI' is set to change that: UFI stands for 'Unique Formula Identifier'. The 16-character code comprising digits and letters links the hazardous product with information about its ingredients and properties which has been transmitted to the poisons centres. In case of emergency, the UFI facilitates rapid information to victims and medical staff about the risk of poisoning and the best medical care. Within the EU, many products that are classified as harmful to health already carry the UFI on the label. From 2025, it will be mandatory for almost all products classified as hazardous. The BfR had jointly proposed the UFI in 2011 and has been involved in its development ever since.

More information:
<https://poisoncentres.echa.europa.eu> > English > Every second counts.
www.youtube.com > Accidental poisoning - how the UFI code helps



Research for safer tattoos

The 2nd International Conference on Tattoo Safety brought together experts from the fields of toxicology, analytics, legislation and manufacturing in Berlin in November 2021. The BfR event provided a platform for discussion of the toxicological assessment of tattoo inks and their manufacturing quality. Although many people consider tattoos to be harmless to health, little research has been done on tattoo inks and the long-term effects of pigments in the body. For example, the experts evaluated current research findings and identified data gaps. The new regulation through the European Chemicals Directive was also discussed. From January 2022, certain substances used in tattoo inks and permanent make-up will be gradually restricted in the EU, including the pigments Blue 15:3 and Green 7. The BfR has formulated minimum requirements for tattoo inks, and test methods for manufacturers and distributors. Among others, this opinion is intended to help identify tattoo pigments that are not suitable for tattoos. The BfR does not yet make any recommendations for use due to a lack of data.

More information:
BfR Opinion No. 031/2021 of 14 October 2021