

Teflon chemical to be altered by 2015

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A chemical used to make Teflon will be altered to prevent its release into the environment from finished products or from manufacturing plants.

Eight companies -- including the DuPont Co., which first marketed Teflon in 1945 -- agreed Wednesday to alter perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, in all Teflon-coated consumer products.

Although the chemical will still be used to manufacture Teflon and other products, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said processes will be developed to curtail the chemical's release into the environment, The Washington Post reported Thursday.

PFOA has been linked to cancer and birth defects in animals and is in the blood of 95 percent of Americans, including pregnant women. It has also been found in the blood of marine organisms and Arctic polar bears.

The voluntary agreement, crafted by the EPA, requires companies to reduce PFOA emissions by 95 percent no later than 2010. The companies also agreed to cut trace amounts of the compound in consumer products by 95 percent during the same period and virtually eliminate them by 2015, the Post said.

PFOA is also used in such products as pizza boxes, non-stick pans and microwave-popcorn bags.

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