

## Tuesday Minute Transcript

This Week's Topic

# Don't Rely On The New Supplement Industry Standards?



**"Despite industry "cleanup", Biotics QC has rejected more raw materials in the last 6 months than in the past 2 years."**

As the supplement industry continues to explode, industry standards are becoming more defined. Recently new regulations are being enforced. There is a lot of last minute shuffling going on as everyone is now trying to get compliant. Fortunately for Biotics Research, they have been getting ready for over six years. On the other hand, many of the suppliers they buy raw materials from weren't ready.

What has been interesting to observe for everyone involved is that after the deadline to become compliant, Biotics quality control lab had to reject more raw materials in six months than they normally did in the past two years. To illustrate what we see happening in the industry, here are a few current news stories.

The first story comes from a lawsuit, based on tests of ten fish oil supplements that the plaintiffs said had been conducted by independent labs. Supplements were shown by the independent testing to have



PCBs, polychlorinated biphenyl, at levels above safe consumption limits set by Proposition 65.

Proposition 65 established a safety limit of total PCBs at 0.09 ppm. In fact, the lawsuit stated that some products contained as much as 70 times the amount of PCBs as other products!

Some of the manufacturers named in the suit were some of the biggest players in the industry. You can click below and see a letter written by Biotics on their response to this issue. Obviously, Biotics was not named in the suit. Their inter-

nal quality control far exceeds Proposition 65.

Here's another breaking story. Chromium is an essential mineral, important for insulin function. For that reason it is also commonly found in supplements for weight loss as people try to reduce their insulin levels.

ConsumerLab.com recently selected for review and testing six supplements and found 3 out of 6 were contaminated with a carcinogenic form of chromium known as hexavalent chromium (chromium VI). Hexavalent chromium was at the center of the movie

Erin Brockovich and is formed as an industrial byproduct.

Another legal suit filed in Alameda County Superior Court in California sited 74 manufacturers and suppliers for selling products containing excessive levels of lead, obviously a toxic heavy metal and is something easily identified if you are looking for it.

A team at the Biotics Quality Control Department put together a chart to summarize the results of the testing they do on a routine basis. Let's take a look: The left hand column lists the materials tested. The far right hand column gives the reasons for rejections. The two middle columns are for internal record keeping.

The first material they rejected was celery; and as you look to the right hand column under reason for rejection, you see it was for bugs. Good thing, imagine opening a container of fiber and being greeted by a moving entity. Worse yet, how about being  $\frac{3}{4}$  finished with the container and discovering the little guy or guys. Let's be realistic. If you are dealing with food, you will see bugs.

The next rejection concerned the quality of primrose oil. According to the testing procedure at Biotics, the oil would have gone rancid, 2 weeks past encapsulation. This basically means that the raw material supplier tried to sell them an outdated product.

The next product rejected was resveratrol. Biotics internal standards are 10 ppm for any one heavy metal. Even though the product was trans-resveratrol, it contained mercury levels over the 10 ppm and was rejected.

The next material, bitter melon, had a pathogenic form of E. coli. Grape skin powder had total bacterial limits beyond acceptance. Broccoli, ginkgo, and Isatis leaf all had levels of lead that were above their standards of 10 ppm.

Finally, Icelandic kelp was rejected as it contained excessive levels of arsenic.

In discussing this chart with Daryl DeLuca the vice president of Biotics, he told me since they put this chart together they rejected a botanical agent as it contained an aflatoxin. Aflatoxins are toxic and among the most carcinogenic substances known.

But even more interesting was a batch of fish oil that passed all the internal quality control tests at the Biotics premises. It was then shipped to an encapsulation plant to put it in capsules. Soft gel caps are a whole different world and only three companies that I know of in the country make them. Here's the rub. When the product came back in soft gel capsules, it exceeded their acceptable peroxide values. Something happened at the soft gel encapsulation plant that denatured the oils. Guess what? The oils were rejected even though they were on back order.

Nobody would have ever known. The encapsulation company didn't even know that they had damaged the product. This is just part of the quality control that Biotics uses on every ingredient in every product.

We haven't even mentioned the activity testing, or what I call the Biotics Bio-print, assuring that the product is biologically active before and after it goes into the capsule or tablet.

Here's the take home message. We live in a toxic world. Heavy metals, bacteria, and oxidation are part of life, but we don't want to be the ones giving any of these agents to our patients. No doubt, regulations have road blocked suppliers, delayed shipments, or caused backorders for a season. But if you think about it, it's worth the wait. Having products that work for our patients is how we build a successful practice.

Thanks for reading this week's edition. I'll see you again next Tuesday.