

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97F-0336]

General Electric Co.; Filing of Food Additive Petition

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing that General Electric Co. has filed a petition proposing that the food additive regulations be amended to change the intrinsic viscosity specifications for poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) oxide resins intended for use in contact with food.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Vir D. Anand, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (HFS-215), Food and Drug Administration, 200 C St. SW., Washington, DC 20204, 202-418-3081.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (sec. 409(b)(5) (21 U.S.C. 348(b)(5))), notice is given that a food additive petition (FAP 7B4551) has been filed by General Electric Co., One Lexan Lane, Mt. Vernon, IN 47620-9364. The petition proposes to amend the food additive regulations in § 177.2460 *Poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) oxide resins* to change the intrinsic viscosity specifications for the poly(2,6-dimethyl-1,4-phenylene) oxide resins intended for use in contact with food from "not less than 0.40 deciliter per gram" to "not less than 0.30 deciliter per gram" as determined by ASTM method D1243-79.

The agency has determined under 21 CFR 25.24(9) that this action is of the type that does not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required.

Dated: July 31, 1997.

Alan M. Rulis,

Director, Office of Premarket Approval,
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition.
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Food and Drug Administration

[Docket No. 97N-0314]

Prescription Drug Products; Levothyroxine Sodium

AGENCY: Food and Drug Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing that orally administered drug products containing levothyroxine sodium are new drugs. There is new information showing significant stability and potency problems with orally administered levothyroxine sodium products. Also, these products fail to maintain potency through the expiration date, and tablets of the same dosage strength from the same manufacturer vary from lot to lot in the amount of active ingredient present. This lack of stability and consistent potency has the potential to cause serious health consequences to the public. Manufacturers who wish to continue to market orally administered levothyroxine sodium products must submit new drug applications (NDA's); manufacturers who contend that a particular drug product is not subject to the new drug requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the act) should submit a citizen petition. FDA has determined that orally administered levothyroxine sodium products are medically necessary, and accordingly the agency is allowing current manufacturers 3 years to obtain approved NDA's.

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 14, 1997.

DATES: A citizen petition claiming that a particular drug product is not subject to the new drug requirements of the act should be submitted no later than October 14, 1997.

After August 14, 2000, any orally administered drug product containing levothyroxine sodium, marketed on or before the date of this notice, that is introduced or delivered for introduction into interstate commerce without an approved application, unless found by FDA to be not subject to the new drug requirements of the act under a citizen petition submitted for that product, will be subject to regulatory action.

ADDRESSES: All communications in response to this notice should be identified with Docket No. 97N-0314 and directed to the appropriate office named below:

Applications under section 505 of the act (21 U.S.C. 355): Documents and Records Section (HFA-224), 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857.

Citizen petitions (see § 10.30 (21 CFR 10.30)) contending that a particular drug product is not subject to the new drug requirements of the act: Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305), Food and Drug Administration, 12420 Parklawn Dr., rm. 1-23, Rockville, MD 20857.

Requests for an opinion on the applicability of this notice to a specific product: Division of Prescription Drug Compliance and Surveillance (HFD-330), Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration, 7500 Standish Pl., Rockville, MD 20855.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christine F. Rogers, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (HFD-7), Food and Drug Administration, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857, 301-594-2041.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**I. Background**

Levothyroxine sodium is the sodium salt of the levo isomer of the thyroid hormone thyroxine (T₄). Thyroid hormones affect protein, lipid, and carbohydrate metabolism; growth; and development. They stimulate the oxygen consumption of most cells of the body, resulting in increased energy expenditure and heat production, and possess a cardiostimulatory effect that may be the result of a direct action on the heart.

Levothyroxine sodium was first introduced into the market before 1962 without an approved NDA, apparently in the belief that it was not a new drug. Orally administered levothyroxine sodium is used as replacement therapy in conditions characterized by diminished or absent thyroid function such as cretinism, myxedema, nontoxic goiter, or hypothyroidism. The diminished or absent thyroid function may result from functional deficiency, primary atrophy, partial or complete absence of the thyroid gland, or the effects of surgery, radiation, or antithyroid agents. Levothyroxine sodium may also be used for replacement or supplemental therapy in patients with secondary (pituitary) or tertiary (hypothalamic) hypothyroidism.

Hypothyroidism is a common condition. In the United States, 1 in every 4,000 to 5,000 babies is born hypothyroid. Hypothyroidism has a prevalence of 0.5 percent to 1.3 percent in adults. In people over 60, the prevalence of primary hypothyroidism