



Protests grow over yoga-mat chemical's use in bread

By Kerry Tomlinson, KATU News | Published: Mar 10, 2014 at 6:20 PM PDT



**CONSUMER
ALERT**

PORTLAND, Ore. – Peanut butter and jelly and ... yoga mats?

Protests are mounting over a chemical used in many types of bread that's also used to manufacture yoga mats and flip-flops.

The chemical, called azodicarbonamide, can speed up the bread-making process and make bread softer for longer.

The KATU Problem Solvers visited one man – Dave Crowe of Newport – who had a month-old loaf that still felt soft and squishy.

Crowe compared the bread to a yoga mat. "Maybe that's what we should use it for," said Crowe.

Though azodicarbonamide is banned in Europe and Australia, it's still OK in the U.S. An online petition was circulated asking Subway to stop using it in its sandwiches – and Subway agreed earlier this year.

But a check by the Problem Solvers showed it's still quite prevalent in grocery-store aisles.

It's in Country Oven bread. It's in Smucker's Uncrustables. It's in frozen White Castle hamburgers.

Reports say it's also in bread at McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's and other restaurants.

"I mean, it's really time, it's really time to take it out of everything that they use," Crowe said.

Some ingredients, of course, have multiples uses.

For example, you can make candles with soy, or eat it with your stir-fry.

You can make a chair with bamboo, or eat bamboo shoots in your salad.

Doctor Andrew Erlandsen, who teaches at Portland's National College of Natural Medicine, said he advises exercising caution.

"We are really the guinea pigs here in this national experiment, if you will," he said. "Any time there is a food ingredient we're not familiar with, I always use caution."

The FDA approves the use of azodicarbonamide in bread, and it's banned in Europe and Australia not because it's proven unhealthy in food, but because it can cause respiratory illnesses in workers exposed to large amounts of it.

Erlandsen said that while there are no studies proving it hurts people who it, there are also none demonstrating otherwise. He said to check all of your food labels closely.

"I don't know the effects it's going to have on my own health and my family's health," he said. "If there are ingredients on the list that you are not familiar with or don't know how to pronounce, I urge caution."