



1. What practices does your brand currently employ to ensure that your products are safe and free of harmful heavy metals?

ESC proudly adheres to the standards set forth in our industry, and we voluntarily commit ourselves to the highest standards for our supply chain and processes. We continue to be in-compliance with the standard set by NCA which are threshold based. We undergo third party testing of our chocolates. We're confident in the safety of our products.

We are currently testing our chocolate independently on a quarterly basis and our team is reviewing the best practices moving forward to ensure the lowest amount of heavy metals possible.

As the Consumer Reports article mentions, these solutions do take time, but we are committed to implementing and measuring the effectiveness of these efforts.

2. Do you all test finished products for heavy metals?

Heavy metals are naturally occurring in the soil and air all around the world and are present in many of the foods we eat (most commonly, leafy greens, root vegetables, nuts, fruits, and fish). In the case of chocolate, the source is the cocoa beans themselves, and is influenced by where they are grown, harvested and dried.

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) standards (also known as Prop 65) cited in the Consumer Reports study are not food safety standards. In 2018, the chocolate and cocoa industry agreed to a Consent Judgment in California, which established concentration levels for both lead and cadmium that supersede the OEHHA levels for cocoa and chocolate products. All products in the study – including ESC – are well under these limits.

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3. What practices does your brand employ in your sourcing to ensure that your suppliers are testing for the presence of harmful heavy metals?

Endangered Species Chocolate only sources chocolate from suppliers who are active participants in and in compliance with the Consent Judgement in California referenced above. These suppliers are bound to regular testing and process improvement protocols.

Our supplier's food safety and quality teams work closely together with suppliers to ensure that the proper control measures and procedures are in place for all products supplied to them. They take several measures to minimize the levels of cadmium and lead in cocoa products, including monitoring and testing, the blending of beans to balance levels, and robust cleaning and shell removal practices. Our supplier's monitoring program includes heavy metals. The analyses are performed by an external laboratory on cocoa beans (for cocoa powder products) and chocolate liquor.

4. Does your brand currently offer any products that have reliably and consistently tested below California's Maximum Allowable Dose Levels for these metals? If so, which products?

Yes! We have tested our products with the highest percentage of cocoa to find that both are substantially under the threshold set by As You Sow and the NCA. All other products contain a lesser amount of cocoa and therefore are also under these thresholds.

88% Dark Chocolate

Lead: 0.025

Cadmium: 0.052

72% Dark Chocolate

Lead: 0.029ppm

Cadmium: 0.091ppm

5. What changes in sourcing/testing are underway or planned as a result of Consumer Reports' research?

We are working diligently with our chocolate supplier to assure the highest quality product that contains the most minimal heavy metal traces possible. We have also implemented quarterly testing of our products to ensure we continue to stay below the safety thresholds set by the NCA.

6. Solving the heavy metal contamination issue is an industrywide issue. Is your brand working with any industry groups/brand coalitions to solve this challenge?

Yes! This year Endangered Species Chocolate will be an active member of the NCA and as in years past, will participate in all available studies to address this issue. We are also keeping in close step with our chocolate supplier to support the efforts they are championing with the association as well.