

# The Safety of Polystyrene Foodservice

## *Health Experts' and Agencies' Views*

### **U.S. National Toxicology Program (NTP)**

Dr. Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., Director, U.S. National Toxicology Program was quoted widely in [Associated Press](#) reports in June 2011: "Let me put your mind at ease right away about polystyrene foam\*" ... [the levels of styrene from polystyrene containers] "are hundreds if not thousands of times lower than have occurred in the occupational setting...In finished products, certainly styrene is not an issue." *Source: news reports of Associated Press story, June 2011*

John Bucher, associate director of the National Toxicology Program, was quoted in [Associated Press](#) reports in August 2011: "The risks, in my estimation, from polystyrene are not very great," he said. "It's not worth being concerned about."

*Source: news reports of Associated Press story, August 2011*

### **U.S. National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)**

[NIEHS](#) in June 2011 noted: "Styrene should not be confused with polystyrene (foam)\*. Although styrene, a liquid, is used to make polystyrene, which is a solid plastic, we do not believe that people are at risk from using polystyrene products."

*Source: NIEHS web site*

### **Otis Brawley, Chief Medical Officer, American Cancer Society**

[Bloomberg News](#) in June 2011 reported that Brawley said, "Consumers don't need to worry about polystyrene cups and food containers..." Quote: "I see no problems with polystyrene foam\* cups."

*Source: Bloomberg News, June 2011*

### **Food & Drug Administration**

Based on scientific tests over five decades, FDA has determined that polystyrene is safe for use in foodservice products. Polystyrene meets the FDA's stringent standards for use in packaging both to store and to serve food.

### **Harvard Center for Risk Analysis**

A twelve-member panel of international experts selected by the [Harvard Center for Risk Analysis](#) reported in 2002 that the very low levels of styrene present in foods – whether naturally occurring or from polystyrene foodservice products – does not represent a concern to human health.

[For more information on polystyrene foodservice:](#) [www.plasticfoodservicefacts.com](http://www.plasticfoodservicefacts.com)

[For more information on styrene:](#) [youknowstyrene.org](http://youknowstyrene.org)

\* Original quotes used the term "Styrofoam". STYROFOAM™ is a registered trademark of The Dow Chemical Company that represents its branded building material products, including rigid foam and structural insulated sheathing, and more. The brand name often is misused as a generic term for foam foodservice products.