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# Study: Chemical used in hand sanitizer hinders muscles

Sacramento Business Journal by Kathy Robertson, Senior Staff Writer

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A widely used antibacterial chemical widely used in hand soaps, sanitizers and other personal-care products may impair muscle function, according to a new study by UC Davis researchers.

Triclosan hinders muscle contractions at the cellular level, slows swimming in fish and reduces muscular strength in mice, researchers at **University of California Davis** and the **University of Colorado** conclude in a study that appears online in the proceedings of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

"Triclosan is found in virtually everyone's home and is pervasive in the environment," said [Isaac Pessah](#), professor and chair of the Department of Molecular Biosciences at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, in a news release. He is the principal investigator of the study.

"These findings provide strong evidence that the chemical is of concern to both human and environmental health," he added.

Triclosan is commonly found in antibacterial care products such as hand soaps, deodorants, mouthwashes, toothpaste, bedding, clothes, carpets, toys and trash bags.

The U.S. **Environmental Protection Agency** estimated in 1998 that more than 1 million pounds of triclosan are produced annually in the U.S., and that the chemical is detectable in waterways and aquatic organisms ranging from algae to fish to dolphins, as well as urine, blood and breast milk.

Although triclosan was first developed to prevent bacterial infections in hospitals, its use has become widespread in antibacterial products used in the home.

Because the chemical structure of triclosan resembles other toxic chemicals that persist in the environment, the **Food and Drug Administration** and the Environmental Protection Agency are conducting new risk assessments of the chemical. Based on the outcome of their study, call for greater restrictions.

Kathy Robertson covers health care, law, lobbying and labor and workplace issues for the Sacramento Business Journal.