

Fact bite #62



Essential use

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Essential use is a concept that can help phase out the use of hazardous chemicals by asking whether certain applications are really useful and necessary.

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The European Commission defines an essential use as one that is:

- **Necessary for health or safety**
- **Critical for the functioning of society**
- **Lacking availability of acceptable alternatives**

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Uses of hazardous substances in food packaging and other food contact materials (FCMs) are likely not, per this definition, essential.

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PFAS, for instance, have been demonstrated as not essential in non-stick cookware since that use is not necessary for health, not critical for the functioning of society, and safer alternatives exist (such as stainless steel cookware).

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Colorants in FCMs are another example. They are not essential since their primary purpose is for marketing.

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