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HCPA Responds to Concerns About the Safety of Quat Disinfectants

WASHINGTON, DC – The Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA) released the following statement today, attributed to Dr. Steve Bennett, Senior Vice President, Scientific & Regulatory Affairs, HCPA, in response to an [article](#) in *Chemical & Engineering News* (C&EN) about the safety of quat disinfectants.

“Quats are commonly used as active ingredients in disinfectants and sanitizers and can kill more than 150 kinds of bacteria, viruses, and fungi. These products provide significant public health benefits, and have become even more critical since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Quats are a well-understood and effective class of chemicals, usually classified under the chemical names ADBAC and DDAC. Numerous reputable studies show no sign of systemic toxicity in humans¹. This data includes 10 developmental and reproductive studies that did not show any evidence of negative reproductive or developmental effects.

There was unfortunate oversight in the C&EN article regarding how quats are regulated, creating unwarranted concerns about their safety.

The article suggests that quats have not been evaluated for safety because they were considered an existing chemical when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began regulating the manufacture of chemicals as part of the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

Many uses of quats are regulated as [EPA-registered pesticides in antimicrobial products](#). To register any pesticide, the EPA requires a comprehensive understanding of the toxicity, exposure, and uses of the chemical to ensure its safety. Additionally, pesticides are regulated by the EPA under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) – and have been for more than 50 years.

Under FIFRA, ingredients in pesticide products, including quats, are re-evaluated for safety through a process called re-registration. The most recent re-registration was completed in 2006, with another one scheduled to be completed in 2021. During the re-registration process, the EPA requests and reviews any new or missing scientific studies, as well as assesses the human health and ecological impacts of the chemicals using the most up-to-date science and input from stakeholders and the public.

¹ Anthony Luz, Paul DeLeo, Nathan Pechacek, Mike Freemantle, Human health hazard assessment of quaternary ammonium compounds: Didecyl dimethyl ammonium chloride and alkyl (C12–C16) dimethyl benzyl ammonium chloride, *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology*, Volume 116, 2020, 104717, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0273230020301434>.

The household and commercial products industry, which represents the disinfectants that are formulated with quats, is committed to providing products that meet the rigorous safety standards required by the government, while helping consumers live cleaner and healthier lives.”

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About HCPA

The Household & Commercial Products Association (HCPA) is the premier trade association representing companies that manufacture and sell \$180 billion annually of familiar and trusted products used for cleaning, protecting, maintaining, and disinfecting homes and commercial environments. HCPA member companies employ 200,000 people in the U.S. whose work helps consumers and workers to create cleaner, healthier and more productive lives.