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Mice survive botulism test

SEATTLE

Four laboratory mice survived injections with liquid from damaged cans of Alaska salmon, showing no signs of botulism poisoning.

But federal officials cautioned against drawing too strong a conclusion from the tests.

Ellen Miller, regional consumer affairs specialist for the Food and Drug Administration, said the mice passed a 72-hour deadline Monday apparently with no ill effects.

"They're as rosy as can be," she said. This means the agency is "pretty sure" there wasn't any botulism toxin developed in the two defective cans found in Seattle.

But, she said, "it simply means we're okay on those two cans."

The tests were ordered in the wake of a huge recall of Alaska canned salmon after a Belgian man died Feb. 6, apparently after eating salmon from a can produced at the New England Fish Co.-Fidalgo cannery in Ketchikan, Alaska.

"We're continuing with the recall," said Sue Hutchcroft, Seattle spokeswoman for the FDA.

The mice, injected Friday, were monitored for 72 hours, Hutchcroft said. The deadline passed about 1 p.m. Monday.

She said recall would continue "because the salmon could be contaminated with other things. The fish was decom-

posed."

The mice were injected with a liquid extracted from tins of salmon found in a Seattle warehouse. The cans were marked with the same code and were punctured the same way as the 7 1/2-ounce tin blamed in the death of the Belgian.

The salmon recall possibly involves millions of cans and applies to all tins used at the Ketchikan cannery in 1980 and 1981.

The distinguishing feature is a marking "KK13," "HK13," "RK13," "CK13," or "MK13" on the top line of a two-line code stamped on lids of the cans.

Government bans popular insulation

WASHINGTON

The government Monday banned further installation of a popular foam insulation already used in a half-million American homes on grounds it poses the risk of cancer and other dangers to health.

The order to halt installation of urea formaldehyde foam insulation will take effect 130 days after publication of a legal notice in the Federal Register, probably within a few weeks.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission's 4-1 vote made final a prohibition on the product proposed last year, which capped a CPSC staff investigation stretching back to the 1970s.

The vote came after the commission staff repeated its recommendation to halt installation of the material, which

emits formaldehyde gasses that can create skin irritation and breathing problems and are a possible cause of cancer.

Commissioner Stuart Statler cast the only negative vote. Statler did not deny the insulation posed some hazard — he said he would not put it in his own home — but he maintained it was possible to set government standards that would protect consumers.

Chairman Nancy Steorts — a Reagan administration appointee who has repeatedly said she favors voluntary programs to protect consumers — said that in this case no standard, voluntary or mandatory, could protect homeowners.

"I wanted to find a voluntary solution," she said. "But, unfortunately, I have concluded there is no voluntary solution to this problem."

Surgeon general criticizes smoking

WASHINGTON

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said Monday that cigarette smoking causes 30 percent of all cancer deaths in the United States and even non-smokers should treat it as "a public health potential hazard."

"Cigarette smoking is clearly identified as the chief preventable cause of death in our society," Koop said in releasing the surgeon general's annual report on smoking and health.

Smoking will likely be the cause of 129,000 of 430,000 cancer-related deaths in the United States this year, \$13 billion worth of health care expenses and more than \$25 billion in lost production and wages each year, he said.

Edward Brandt, the assistant secretary for health who concurred with Koop's assessment, said the possibility that non-smokers may suffer ill effects from smoke is real if not proven and non-smokers should "avoid being in smoke-filled rooms."

Columbia prepares for major test

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

Technicians began inspections Monday to prepare the space shuttle Columbia for an-

other major test this week — the loading of more than a half-million gallons of liquid fuel.

The shuttle's 154-foot-tall external fuel tank will receive a full load of supercold, liquid hydrogen and oxygen propellants under the same conditions as on launch day, now scheduled for March 22. Countdown for the loading will begin Thursday and continue through a simulated liftoff Friday.

The orbiter was going through an electrical systems checkout following a dress rehearsal countdown of the shuttle assembly Friday, when engineers discovered the failure of a steering unit in the left solid-rocket booster.

The seven-day third mission of the reusable space plane is set to begin March 22 and end March 29 with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

Barracks bomb kills 15, injures 61

BEIRUT, Lebanon

A bomb hidden in a garbage truck blew up outside a Revolutionary Guards barracks in Tehran during the Monday morning rush hour, killing 15 people and injuring 61 others, Iran's official media said.

Two schoolchildren and three guards died in the blast which went off near east Tehran's crowded Seapah Square, where lines of workers were waiting for buses, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. Other victims included commuters, street cleaners and bystanders, it said.

The force of the blast destroyed the garbage truck, gouged a nine-foot-wide hole in the street, wrecked 20 nearby vehicles and shattered windows more than 1,000 feet away, the agency said.

No group claimed responsibility for the explosion at 7:18 a.m. — 10:48 p.m. EST Sunday. But official statements in the Iranian capital blamed the blast on the Mujahedeen Khalq guerrilla organization, which has been waging an eight-month campaign of bombings and assassinations to overthrow Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's Islamic fundamentalist government.

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