

Lung disease linked to flavoring chemical

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Politicians and health workers in the United States are pushing for a bill to ban the use of a food flavoring chemical that has been linked to lung disease.

The Washington Post reported on a growing group of California food-flavoring workers who have been diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans, a rare and life-threatening form of fixed obstructive lung disease. The disease, also known as popcorn workers lung, slowly eliminates lung capacity.

A transplant is reportedly the only cure.

The Post reported that since 2001, academic studies have linked the disease with an artificial butter flavoring called diacetyl, often used in microwave popcorn flavoring plants. Flavoring manufacturers have paid out more than \$100 million in lawsuits from workers who have gotten sick with lung ailments during the past five years.

One death from popcorn workers lung has been confirmed. Politicians and health care workers are pushing for a ban on diacetyl.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration has been criticized for being slow in acting on the issue. Because of this, California Assemblywoman Sally Lieber has introduced a bill to ban the use of diacetyl.

The Post reported that most people infected with popcorn workers lung are young Latinos with no history of smoking.

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