



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS

SUBJECT: Updated Warning Regarding Poppy Seed Consumption and Military Drug Testing

On February 17, 2023, Service members were advised to avoid foods containing poppy seeds over concerns that newer seed varieties contained elevated levels of codeine, which could impact military drug testing.

The seeds in foods are naturally sourced from the poppy plant, a commercial crop cultivated by the pharmaceutical and food industries. It has been well documented that the seeds may be contaminated with morphine and codeine during harvest. However, it is the recent increase in codeine contamination in food grade seeds that concerns the Department.

Since the last warning memorandum, significant work has been undertaken to address the issue. The military drug testing program implemented additional measures to distinguish poppy seed ingestion from codeine misuse, including raising the drug testing cutoff for codeine. While these measures significantly reduce the possibility of a drug positive test, avoiding foods containing poppy seed remains the best policy.

The Services should make every effort to inform military applicants and Service members that consumption of poppy seed food products may result in a positive codeine and/or morphine drug test. While removing all poppy seed containing foods from Department facilities and installations is not feasible, I strongly encourage Service members to continue to avoid these products.

Service members are directed to work with their local legal office for any related concerns with urinalysis results, and we will continue to review and update this policy.

Ashish S. Vazirani
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness