

PUBLIC NOTICE

FDA/CSD/CPE/PNS/26/004

FDA INVESTIGATES THE USE OF POLYETHYLENE IN FRYING PLANTAIN CHIPS

Accra: March 11 2026 - The Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) has noted with grave concern, videos and reports circulating on social media alleging the use of polyethylene (plastic) in frying plantain chips to improve the crispiness and shelf-life of the product.

We have commenced a nationwide market surveillance and laboratory testing of plantain chips to ascertain the veracity of these claims and protect the health and safety of consumers. For the records, deliberate melting of plastic in frying oil is a direct chemical contamination of food, making it unwholesome for human consumption.

Public Health Risks of Polyethylene Migration

The introduction of plastic materials, specifically Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE), into oil at high temperatures leads to:

1. Chemical Migration: Hot oil accelerates the leaching of

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plasticizers, phthalates, and antioxidants from the plastic into the food.

2. Toxicological Hazards: Scientific research indicates that long-term ingestion of these migrated chemicals is linked to endocrine disruption, hormonal imbalances, and increased risks of certain cancers.

Caution to Vendors and the Public

Pursuant to Section 100 of the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851), which prohibits the sale of unwholesome or contaminated food, the use of any non-food grade additive, including plastics, in food preparation is a criminal offense. Any person found engaging in this practice will face the full rigors of the law, including prosecution and permanent closure of their business.

Consumers are advised to be vigilant. Avoid plantain chips that have an unusually high chemical scent, a plastic-like after-taste,

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or do not show a noticeable change in texture over time.

Assurance from the Authority

The FDA remains committed to its mandate of protecting public health and is collaborating with local authorities and the Police Service to monitor the activities of these vendors. We urge all food processors to adhere to Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and prioritise the health of consumers by acquiring the FDA Food Hygiene and Vendor Permit.

We will update the public when laboratory results from our ongoing investigations become available. Meanwhile, the public is encouraged to report any suspicious food preparation practices through our official social media handles or the contact numbers provided below.

Signed

Chief Executive Officer

Food and Drugs Authority

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