

## Germs in shower gel

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During random sampling the *Land* testing authority identified a batch of shower gel that was highly contaminated with the bacterium *Enterobacter gergoviae*. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has undertaken a health assessment of this shower gel.

At the present time, BfR has no information about infections arising from the use of shower gels. The determination of the micro-organism content showed that the sample was contaminated with  $10^5$  colony-forming units (CFUs). Although it can be assumed that most of the bacteria are rinsed off the skin along with the shower gel, infection is still possible through broken skin or sensitive mucosal areas. *Enterobacter gergoviae* is a type of bacterium that is ubiquitous in the environment. It can lead to bacterial infections in people in poor health or in individuals who have undergone surgery. The germs are often resistant to antibiotics and this makes treatment more difficult.

According to the European Rapid Alert System for consumer products, the contamination of cosmetics like baby shampoo, cream, make-up, toothpaste and shower gel has increased in recent years. However, it is not possible to make any statements about consumer exposure as the relevant data are not available. According to BfR cosmetics with a high level of bacterial contamination are not, in principle, safe and should not be placed on the market.

The full version of the BfR Opinion in German is available on [http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/206/keime\\_in\\_duschgel.pdf](http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/206/keime_in_duschgel.pdf)