



Baxter International Faces Lawsuits Over Tainted Heparin

Written On January 14, 2010 By [Bob Kraft](#)

Baxter International Inc., which recalled its blood thinner heparin amid reports of allergic reactions and deaths in 2008, faces at least 30 lawsuits in Chicago by injured people or their estates.

As many as 300 product-liability complaints may be filed in the Illinois state court, plaintiffs' attorney Allen Schwartz of Kralovec, Jambois & Schwartz said today in a phone interview. His law firm and two others are working to comply with a judge's order last year to convert an aggregate lawsuit to individual claims against the Deerfield, Illinois-based company.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration requested new manufacturing standards for the blood thinner in 2008 after the problems were linked to tainted ingredients from China.

"This is an actual contaminant that got into the product," Schwartz said.

Baxter, which at the time supplied about 50 percent of the blood thinner and anticoagulant used in the U.S., began a voluntary recall after its monitors noticed an increase in reports of allergic reactions to injections of the drug, said Erin Gardiner, a company spokeswoman, in a phone interview today.

The company began a full recall after determining that other drugmakers would be able to ensure an adequate national supply, according to Gardiner.

'Deeply Regret'

"We deeply regret any impact the 2008 heparin contamination situation may have had on patients and family members," Gardiner said in an e-mailed statement. "If these lawsuits are similar to those that have already been filed, a large number of claims don't involve contaminated heparin or in some cases, even Baxter heparin," she said.

Kraft & Associates
2777 Stemmons Freeway
Suite 1300
Dallas, Texas 75207
Toll Free: (800) 989-9999
FAX: (214) 637-2118
E-mail: info@kraftlaw.com

A key ingredient in heparin is made in China from pig intestines, the company said in a May 2008 statement.

“The decision to source from China is based solely on supply — the majority of the world’s supply of crude heparin comes from China, due to the large number of pigs required,” Baxter said then.

While the contaminating agent was introduced into the process before the product reached Baxter or a Wisconsin-based supplier, the company wasn’t able to determine where it had entered the supply chain, Gardiner said today.

The complaints accuse Baxter and the supplier, Scientific Protein Laboratories LLC, of negligence, alleging their products were unsafe for their intended use. The suits seek money damages for those who were injured and for survivors of those who died.

“Baxter International Inc., which recalled its blood thinner heparin amid reports of allergic reactions and deaths in 2008, faces at least 30 lawsuits in Chicago by injured people or their estates.” That’s the opening sentence of a [Bloomberg News](#) report about the problems faced by the Illinois drug manufacturer. Here are excerpts:

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