

Toxic Plastics Bottles and Containers

Many products contain toxic chemicals that may have detrimental health impact for children exposed during critical stages of development. In this report, we analyze the extent to which five popular brands of baby bottles leach bisphenol A, a developmental, neural, and reproductive toxicant, into liquids coming into contact with them.

Bisphenol A is a Developmental, Neural, and Reproductive Toxicant - Scientists have linked very low doses of bisphenol A exposure to cancers, impaired immune function, early puberty, obesity, diabetes, and hyperactivity, among other problems. In addition, ABC New just reported on 4/15/08 that Bisphenol A was found in the urine of adults and children, umbilical cord, placenta, and is suspected to cause breast cancer and prostate cancer later in life.

Exposure to Bisphenol A is Widespread - Bisphenol A is most commonly used to make clear polycarbonate plastic for consumer products, such as baby bottles and water bottles. Through use, this plastic breaks down and leaches bisphenol A into liquids and foods with which they come into contact. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (USCDCP) found bisphenol A in the urine of over 95% of people they tested. Alarming, the median level of bisphenol A in humans is higher than the level that causes adverse effects in animal studies.

AVOID THE FOLLOWING

Popular Baby Bottles Leach Bisphenol A at Harmful Levels –the bottles tested from all five brands leached bisphenol A at levels found to cause harm in numerous laboratory studies, including:

- Avent
- Dr. Brown's
- Evenflo
- Gerber
- Playtex

You should avoid buying and using #3, #6, and #7

#3 Polyvinyl Chloride or Vinyl (V, PC or PVC) used in some cling wraps, some "soft" bottles.

- PVC is hazardous in all of its phases: manufacturing, the products themselves in the home, and in the disposal of it.
- One of the most toxic plastics, PVC is often used to make food packaging and in the production of plumbing and construction materials. PVC is commonly used in teethers and soft squeeze toys for young children, beach balls, bath toys (some rubber duckies), and dolls.
- To soften PVC into these flexible forms, various toxic chemicals are added as "plasticizers." Traces of these chemicals, known as adipates and phthalates, can leak out of PVC into your food. Some phthalates have been linked to cancer, kidney and liver damage, harm to developing reproductive organs, and premature breast development in baby girls. Inhaling these chemicals can also worsen asthma in children.

#6 Polystyrene (PS) used in foam "clam-shell"-type containers, meat and bakery trays, and in its rigid form, clear take-out containers, some plastic cutlery and cups.

- #6 plastic may leach styrene into the food it touches. A recent study in [Environmental Health Perspectives](#) concluded that some styrene compounds leaching from food containers are estrogenic (meaning they can disrupt normal hormonal functioning).
- Styrene is also a possible human carcinogen by the World Health Organization's International Agency

#7 (other) usually Polycarbonate on the underside, used in 5-gallon water bottles, some baby bottles, some metal can linings.

- #7 can release its primary building block, bisphenol A, another suspected hormone disruptor, into liquids and foods.
- In 1998, the Japanese government ordered manufacturers there to recall and destroy polycarbonate tableware meant for use by children, because it contained excessive amounts of bisphenol A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

You can take a few simple actions to limit exposure to these and other toxic chemicals.

Use Glass or stainless steel when possible. Choose plastic food containers, bottles and cups made of;

1. **#1** polyethylene terephthalate (PET or PETE) used for most clear beverage bottles.
2. **#2** high density polyethylene (HDPE) used for "cloudy" milk and water jugs, opaque food bottles.
3. **#4** low density polyethylene polyethylene (LDPE) used in food storage bags and some "soft" bottles.
4. **#5** polypropylene (PP) used in rigid containers, including some baby bottles, and some cups and bowls.
Medela, Born Free and First Years are better choices.

What can I do to reduce my exposure to the chemicals in plastic?

1. Avoid canned foods, including baby formula, which may contain bisphenol A in their lining.
2. Avoid foods wrapped in plastic, choose butcher paper, waxed paper or cellulose bags.
3. Do not microwave food in plastic or polystyrene.
4. Do not put plastics in the dishwasher, and dispose of any plastic containers or dishware that look scratched or hazy.
5. Choose #1 (PETE) or #2 (HDPE) whenever plastic cannot be avoided!
6. Choose packaging that is made from truly recyclable materials: paper, glass, metal cans.
7. Do not let children put plastic toys in their mouths. Parents should visit our [toy safety page](#)
8. Choose wooden toys or look for products labeled "PVC-free," most children's products are not labeled.
9. Buy in bulk, whenever possible. It is the least-packaged option.
10. Bring cloth bags to your supermarket to carry groceries home.
11. Call manufacturers to find out whether products contain bisphenol A or phthalates.

Should I be concerned about using plastic in the microwave?

The Center for Environmental Oncology of UPCI contends that no plastics (including Styrofoam, wraps or containers) should be used in the microwave. (*See Microwave document*)

Recommendations for Policymakers

Contact your Senator for Michigan. Call 202-224-6221 then call the State Governor at 517-335-7858- to stand for your rights to be informed and protect your children and family.

Phase Out Hazardous Chemicals - Based on the weight of the scientific evidence showing the harm caused by exposure to bisphenol A, the government should act now.

Inform Consumers about the Presence of Dangerous Chemicals - Parents currently have little information to guide their decisions when purchasing products for their family. Manufacturers should be required to label children's products with the name of any potentially dangerous chemical and the specific health risks associated with the chemical.

Reform Chemicals Policy - Chemical manufacturers should be required to provide all potential hazards and health-effects information to the government so agencies can begin to assess the thousands of chemicals currently on the market. Next, pre-market hazard and health-effects testing should be required. Finally, the California Environmental Protection Agency must have the authority to protect public health by banning or restricting the use of a chemical if evidence shows that it can harm human health.

http://www.checnet.org/healthhouse/education/articles-detail.asp?Main_ID=24

To learn about the alternatives to PVC that are available.

<http://www.environmentcalifornia.org>