

TotsPots© never have and never will sell plastics containing BPA.

A Guide to “Bisphenol A” (BPA)

Please find below a brief guide which includes the latest information on the chemical known as BPA. BPA is still included within many products such as baby bottles, sippy cups and baby powder tins. It is widely believed to harm children's development.

WHAT IS BPA?

This is a synthetic estrogen (chemical) used to make hard plastic (polycarbonate) baby bottles more clear and less likely to shatter. It is also found in the resin which is used to coat the inside of cans and metal lids, to stop the metal contaminating the food. This includes some infant formula and fizzy drink containers as well as tins (yes – an innocent tin of peas!!). As well as this, it is used to make polycarbonate plates, cups, beakers, micro-wave oven and some storage pots.

IDENTIFYING PRODUCTS CONTAINING BPA?

The number 7 in the middle of the distinctive recycling triangle indicates that the plastic is “Other” and is usually polycarbonate (which always contains BPA). If it has the term “PC” next to it, it is definitely polycarbonate.



In India, where such identification is not always present, you can usually identify polycarbonate by the characteristics of the plastic – it is clear, tough, hard, resistant to breakage and non-bendable.

WHAT SPARKED CONCERNS ABOUT BPA?

The UK press quickly picked up on Canada, who had implemented a national ban on baby bottles containing BPA. Since this, many other US States and Counties have implemented bans, against the advice of US Food and Drug Administration. UK parents were immediately concerned and wanted to know more.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTED RISKS OF BPA?

There is concern about the impact BPA has, even at low doses, over a prolonged period. Some studies have linked the substance to conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. Studies, some using rats, have also implicated the compound in breast and prostate cancer, male reproductive defects, diabetes, insulin resistance, polycystic ovary syndrome, obesity and hyper-activity. It is claimed the harmful effects appear to start early in life, when small doses of BPA subtly wreak havoc on the developing bodies of foetuses and young children.

SAFE OR NOT?

Given the growing number of US states and countries who are banning the substance and the mixture of studies and ‘experts’ giving different views and findings, the most accurate analysis is that we simply don't know for sure. This is a quote from a Developmental Biologist, Laura Vandenberg, studying BPA at Tufts University in the USA:

"The science is very clear: We can't say this chemical is safe,"

Having researched the subject widely, I concluded that I was simply not prepared to take the risk with my own children, and nor sell anything which risked others.

If, like me, you want to know more detail about the varying finding and views on the subject I've collated them for you below, be prepared to have steam coming out of your ears, given the wide range of responses on the subject!!



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MORE DETAILED VIEWS...

BPA was first shown to be oestrogenic in 1938, in a study using rats. In a 1993 study BPA was found to be oestrogenic in the human breast cancer cell. Another 1995 study found that the liquid in some cans of tinned vegetables contained both BPA and the related chemical dimethyl bisphenol-A.

The highest levels of BPA were found in cans of peas. BPA was also found in the liquid from cans of artichokes, beans, mixed vegetables, corn and mushrooms. All liquids which contained BPA were found to be oestrogenic to a human breast cancer cell, scientists reported.

In September 2008, the media reported on a new study on the effects of Bisphenol A. Dr Iain Lang is a Research Fellow in Epidemiology and Public Health at the Peninsula Medical School in Exeter and one of the authors of the study.

He describes what the study found:

"The study we carried out used publicly accessible data on health information and blood and urine specimens from a large cross-section of the US population. More than 90% of the tested population had measurable levels of Bisphenol A (BPA) in their urine and results showed that people with higher levels of BPA in their urine were more likely to suffer from diabetes or cardiovascular disease."

These findings are important because this is the first time that large-scale data on BPA in humans have been available. The findings are in keeping with some of what's been shown before in animals or tissue samples, but there is still a lot of information we don't know about BPA and how the human body deals with it so more research is needed.

We can't say for sure at the moment that BPA causes these diseases, just that higher BPA levels tend to go along with them. It's possible that some other factor is involved: for example, it could be that people with diabetes act in ways that expose them to more BPA. Because of this uncertainty, it's probably more important to have a healthy lifestyle and diet, which are known to reduce the risk of these diseases.

*This is what the **UK Food Standard Agency** say – taken from their website May 2009:*

"Very small amounts of BPA can transfer from the packaging into food and drinks. It's possible that BPA might affect the hormone system in people's bodies. That said, there has been a lot of research carried out worldwide and there is still no conclusive evidence that these chemicals do have this effect in people."

When the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) set a maximum limit for human daily intakes of BPA in January 2007, it stated that its scientific panel on food contact materials concluded that the setting of a full review was needed, including all available new data from the last five years.

The EFSA scientific panel concluded that the no-observed-adverse-effect level (NOAEL) of five milligram/kg body weight/day identified in the previous evaluation in 2002, remains valid.

The panel also concluded that reports of low-dose endocrine effects of BPA in rodents did not demonstrate such activity in ways that were "robust or reproducible".



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"New studies have shown significant differences between humans and rodents, such as the fact that people metabolise and excrete BPA from their system far more quickly than rodents, further limiting the relevance of low-dose effects of BPA reported in some rodent studies for human risk assessment," EFSA stated.

"Studies have also shown that mice are particularly sensitive to oestrogens. Given that BPA is a weak oestrogen, the absence of adverse effects at 5 milligram/kg body weight and below in a new robust study on mice and two generations of their offspring adds further confidence to the risk assessment."

The EFSA scientific panel noted that conservative estimates of current daily exposure to the chemical put it at 30 per cent of the TDI in all population groups. "These exposure estimates include BPA migration into canned foods and into food in contact with Polycarbonate tableware or storage receptacles," EFSA stated.

The estimates do not include either potential migration of BPA from receptacles into food during microwave heating or into drinking water due to the use of resins in water pipes and in water storage tanks.

"There is mounting scientific evidence that BPA is toxic, especially to children," said Aaron Freeman, policy director Environmental Defense Canada, which participated in the study.

"Governments should be acting quickly, starting with a ban on BPA in food and beverage containers."

This is what the *Avent* website says about it (*Avent* is a major baby bottle manufacturer):

"Now, we are applying the same expertise to develop new products, including more BPA free options in our infant feeding, pacifier and breast pump lines. Because we know that needs sometimes change, but our commitment to bring you the best products for your baby remains constant."

<http://www.avent.co.uk>

Because BPA can mimic the hormone estrogen inside the body, it has been associated with permanent injury, particularly in children. It is so widely used in so many consumer products that most Americans have trace amounts of the chemical in their blood. In higher amounts and in young children, it can be devastating.

Some laboratory testing has revealed a link between BPA and breast cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and certain neurological disorders. The Food and Drug Administration has said that BPA is safe when used at currently established limits. Officials in Canada and some European countries have taken a harder stand against BPA and banned its use altogether.

OTHER BPA BANS IN PLACE

Suffolk County, New York became the first county in the U.S. to formally ban BPA in infant bottles and sippy cups. Minnesota implemented a statewide ban in 2008 and Congressional and Senate leaders recently introduced companion legislation which, if approved and made law, would ban the chemical from being used in any of the products designed for children.



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So, Chicago leaders join a growing chorus of anti-BPA sentiment that appears to be winning the battle to keep the controversial chemical out of children's products. The version of the new citywide ordinance prohibits BPA from "any empty bottle or cup specifically designed to be filled with food or liquid to be used primarily by a child under the age of 3."

Belinda Phipps of the National Childbirth Trust stated:

"Babies are particularly vulnerable. There are now viable alternatives to BPA. There is no reason to continue using it."