

HUMAN EXPOSURE TO BPA

“We do not know how much is safe.”
- Dr. Hugh Taylor,
Chief of Endocrinology
at Yale University
School of Medicine

What does your favorite can of soft drink and can of vegetable soup have in common? They probably contain the chemical BPA.

BPA is a chemical used in polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins. Polycarbonate plastics are used to make everything from baby bottles to CDs, whereas epoxy resins are used in everything from canned food liners to dental sealants.

In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control reported that BPA was found in the urine of 93 percent of the 2,517 people sampled in a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Humans break down and excrete BPA within a few days, so the fact that the chemical is consistently present means that consumers are constantly being exposed. The widespread exposure is a concern because BPA has been associated with health risks to include reproductive system abnormalities, prostate and breast cancer, obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and child asthma. There is special concern for fetuses, infants, children, and women who are trying to conceive.

The Food and Drug Association supports reasonable steps to reduce human exposure to BPA and has pledged \$30 million along with other U.S. health agencies toward research that would clarify BPA's effects on environment, brain development, reproduction, and potential carcinogenicity. Meanwhile, scientists around the world do not agree on how much is safe.

The AAFCS Resolution on Human Exposure to BPA encourages members to support local, statewide, and national educational programs that: 1) are designed to help individuals and families avoid exposure to BPA and 2) encourage the banning of BPA in food packaging and other consumer products.

What can families do to limit exposure?

- Do not microwave polycarbonate plastic.
- Avoid plastic containers with #7 on bottom.
- Do not wash polycarbonate containers in a dishwasher with harsh detergents.
- Choose powdered formula for infants.
- Use BPA-free baby bottles and sippy cups.
- Go with fresh or frozen foods or those packaged in glass or cartons.
- Select stainless steel BPA-free water bottles.



What actions can you take?

- Contact companies to advocate the removal of BPA from food packaging such as canned foods and canning lids. Educate them about packaging alternatives: Tritan Copolyester, high density polyethylene, polypropylene, Grilamid TR-90 thermoplastic nylon, and glass. Alternatives to BPA-laden can liners include polyester coatings and baked-on resins. Tetra Paks are paperboard alternatives to plastic and cans altogether.
- Educate your legislators.
- Participate on issues surrounding BPA during the FDA's public comment period(s) at regulations.gov.

About AAFCS

The American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS), founded in 1909, is the only national organization that provides leadership and support to family and consumer sciences (FCS) students and professionals across multiple practice settings. AAFCS' members are elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educators, researchers, and administrators; Cooperative Extension educators; and professionals in business and industry, not-for-profit organizations, and government.