

Information on Bisphenol A (BPA) For Your Parents

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What is BPA?

Many food and liquid containers are made of polycarbonate, or lined with an epoxy that contains the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) used to harden plastics and prevent cans from rusting.

There is controversy over the possible harmful effects BPA may have on humans particularly on infants and children in their developmental phases. Animal studies have shown effects on endocrine functions in animals related to exposure to BPA . The recent panel study suggests the need for further clarification of what level of exposure to BPA might cause similar effects in humans.

Regulatory agencies in Canada, Europe and Japan agree that the current BPA exposure levels through food packaging do not pose an immediate health risk to the general population, including infants and children.

Advice for Parents

Breastfeeding is one way to reduce potential BPA exposure. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for a minimum of 4 months but preferably for 6 months. Breastfeeding should be continued, with the addition of complementary foods, at least through the first 12 months of age and thereafter as long as mutually desired by mother and infant.

Parents considering switching children from liquid to powdered formula should be reminded that mixing procedures may differ, so they should pay special attention in preparing formula from powder.

Parents with babies on specialized formulas to address medical conditions should not switch children off those formulas, as the known risks of doing so would outweigh any potential risks posed by BPA.

Concerned parents can take the following precautionary measures to reduce babies' exposure to BPA:

- * Avoid clear plastic bottles or containers with the #7 imprinted on them. Many contain BPA

- * Consider using certified or identified BPA-free plastic bottles

- * Use bottles made of opaque plastic. These bottles (made of polyethylene or polypropylene) do not contain BPA

- * Glass bottles can be an alternative, but be aware of the risk of injury to baby or parent if the bottle is dropped or broken

- * Because heat may cause the release of BPA from plastic, consider the following:

- o Do not boil polycarbonate bottles

- o Do not heat polycarbonate bottles in the microwave

- o Do not wash polycarbonate bottles in the dishwasher

- o Risks associated with giving infants inappropriate (home-made condensed milk) formulas or alternative (soy or goat) milk are far greater than the potential effects of BPA