



Bisphenol A

Bisphenol A (BPA) is one of the world's most widely-manufactured chemicals, widespread in humans as well as in the environment. BPA is an endocrine disruptor and can be toxic to reproduction even at low levels of exposure.

BPA CAN HARM THE UNBORN CHILD

BPA has feminizing (oestrogenic) properties and interferes with the hormone system. BPA may have its strongest effects on unborn children and on young, developing children even at very low levels of exposure. BPA exposure is associated with health

effects such as obesity, heart disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer, endometriosis, diabetes, fertility problems, birth defects, altered immune system and effects on brain development and behaviour.

FROM FOOD CONTACT MATERIALS TO CASH RECEIPTS

BPA is mainly polymerized to form polycarbonate but also used for the production of epoxy resins. BPA is one of the world's most widely-manufactured chemicals and can be found in many common goods such as plastics, food and drink containers, toys, computers, cash receipts and medical equipment. Both polycarbonate and epoxy resins can leach residual, unreacted BPA into food or the environment, especi-

ally if exposed to heat, UV light or strongly basic (alkaline) or acidic conditions. When used in thermal paper such as cash receipts and lottery tickets, BPA is a powdery film on the surface and not chemically bound to the paper, allowing it to be rubbed off onto and absorbed through the skin. Humans and the environment are continuously exposed to BPA from these various sources.

ACTIONS AGAINST BPA

In the EU, BPA has been classified as a reproductive toxicant category 3, although some Member States wanted the tougher category 2 classification. A category 3 reproductive toxicant means that evidence from animal studies on BPA causes concern for human fertility and/or for developmental toxic effects in humans.

Canada was the first country in the world to classify BPA as a toxic substance. Denmark and France banned the use of BPA in infant feeding bottles in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Denmark also banned BPA from all food contact materials for children up to three years old. From 1 March 2011, there is an EU ban on BPA in infant feeding bottles. Bans on BPA in baby bottles are also in place in Australia and in several US states.

BPA ON THE SIN LIST

BPA was included in the first version of the SIN List, launched in 2008, due to its classification as a possible reproductive

toxicant (Category 3), to its endocrine disrupting properties and because BPA is commonly detected in humans.

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READ MORE:

The concerns about Bisphenol A (BPA) and recommendations for action. A CHEM Trust Position Paper - Dec 2010
<http://www.chemtrust.org.uk/>