



BISPHENOL A

What is bisphenol A?

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a common chemical used to produce polycarbonate plastic. Polycarbonate is a hard, clear plastic used in a wide variety of consumer products. Polycarbonates are typically labeled with “7” or a “PC” near the recycle symbol.

Polycarbonate is used to produce water bottles and baby bottles and can be found in linings of cans and other beverage containers. Polycarbonate and BPA can also be found in sports equipment, medical devices, and CDs.

Why should I be concerned?

Recently, news stories have covered BPA. Canada banned the use of BPA. Large store chains are pulling bottles from their shelves, and major manufacturers are recalling products containing BPA.

The latest information indicates that BPA can pose potential health risks, particularly to children and infants. The expected levels of exposure for the average person or child are below the potentially hazardous levels.

How can people be exposed to bisphenol A?

The most common way that people are exposed to BPA is through food and drinks stored in containers containing the chemical. Cleaning polycarbonate bottles with harsh detergents, or using them to store hot or acidic foods, can increase your exposure to BPA. Polycarbonate bottles that became cloudy through long-term use may contribute higher levels of BPA to liquids stored in them.

How does bisphenol A work, and how can it affect my health?

BPA is considered an endocrine disruptor. This means that once the chemical is in the body, it can act in place of a normal hormone (in this case estrogen) and disrupt normal processes in the body. BPA has been linked to developmental effects, neurological problems, and low sperm counts. It may contribute to cancer.

However, recent reports cite limited evidence and numerous calls for additional research. Historic research is confusing and often contradictory. There is a small potential for health effects, particularly in infants.

What did the National Toxicology Program (NTP) conclude about bisphenol A?

The NTP has “some concern” for BPA’s effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and children at current exposure levels.

Poison Control Center 24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-800-222-1222
DPH 24/7 Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156



Frequently Asked Questions

The NTP has “minimal concern” for effects on the mammary gland and an earlier age for puberty in females, fetuses, infants, and children at current exposure levels.

The NTP has “negligible concern” that exposure of pregnant women to BPA will result in fetal or neonatal mortality, birth defects, or reduced birth weight and growth in their offspring.

The NTP has “negligible concern” that exposure to BPA will cause reproductive effects in non-occupationally exposed adults and “minimal concern” for workers exposed to higher levels in occupational settings.

What factors limit use or exposure to bisphenol A?

These factors reduce exposure to BPA:

- Educate yourself about the products you use. Alternatives to BPA are available.
- Look at the bottom of the bottle you are using. A “7” indicates a plastic that may contain BPA.
- Do not put boiling water or acidic materials into polycarbonate bottles.
- Replace polycarbonate bottles at regular intervals or when they become cloudy.

Technical information for Bisphenol A

CAS Number: 80-05-7

Chemical Formula: C₁₅H₁₆O₂

Carcinogenicity (EPA): Unknown.

MCL (Drinking Water): Not established.

OSHA Standards: Not established.

NIOSH Standards: Not established.

Resources

National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences, Bisphenol A (BPA).
<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/sya-bpa/index.cfm>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. *Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards*, www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/npgd0196.html.

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Bisphenol A (BPA).
<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-additives-petitions/bisphenol-bpa>

Poison Control Center 24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-800-222-1222
DPH 24/7 Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156