



## Bisphenol A

Bisphenol A (BPA) is an industrial chemical used to make a hard, clear plastic known as polycarbonate, which is used in many consumer products, including reusable water bottles and baby bottles. Bisphenol A is also found in epoxy resins, which act as a protective lining on the inside of metal-based food and beverage cans.

# Bisphenol A

## Fact Sheet



### The Government of Canada is Taking Action

Canada is the first country in the world to take action on bisphenol A, thanks to our *Chemicals Management Plan*. This Plan was introduced in 2006 to review the safety of widely-used chemicals that have been in the marketplace for many years, and to update our knowledge and understanding of these chemicals. Based on recent advances in science, we are now aware of potentially harmful effects we could not detect before.

### Health Concerns

The preliminary research tells us the general public need not be concerned. In general, most Canadians are exposed to very low levels of bisphenol A and it does not pose a significant health risk.

Our focus now is on the health of newborns and infants under 18 months. Science tells us that exposure levels are below those that could cause health effects, but since they are close to the levels where potential effects could occur, the Government wants to be prudent and reduce exposures further.

Studies have shown the main source of exposure for newborns and infants is from bisphenol A migrating from the lining of cans into liquid infant formula and migrating from the polycarbonate baby bottles into the liquid inside following the addition of boiling water.

Therefore, Health Canada is working with infant formula manufacturers to reduce levels of bisphenol A in the lining of infant formula cans, and encouraging the development of alternatives. As well, if no new information comes forward during the public consultation period, it is our intention to ban the importation, sale and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles.

## Environmental Concerns

Our initial assessment shows that at low levels, bisphenol A can harm fish and organisms over time. Studies also indicate that it can currently be found in municipal wastewater.

We are taking early action to protect the environment from the harmful effects of bisphenol A. We are taking an aggressive and precautionary approach with this new information and will work with stakeholders to find ways to stop bisphenol A from being released into the environment. We will move quickly to determine best practices and take the necessary measures to ensure its safe use and disposal.

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## Advice for Parents and Caregivers

- If you continue to use polycarbonate baby bottles, it is recommended that parents and caregivers do not put boiling water in them, as very hot water causes bisphenol A to migrate out of the bottle at a much higher rate.
- If you are unsure as to whether your bottles are polycarbonate, check to see if the bottom of the bottle has the number 7 in the centre of the recycling symbol. Although the number 7 is a broad category, you can only be sure it is polycarbonate if the number 7 also has a PC beside it. If the bottle does not have a recycling symbol, there is no certain means of identifying whether it is made from polycarbonate or not.
- Water should be boiled and allowed to cool to lukewarm in a non-polycarbonate container before transferring to baby bottles. This advice is consistent with proper instructions for the preparation of infant formula.
- These bottles can be sterilized according to instructions on infant formula labels and can be cleaned in the dishwasher. They should be left to cool to room temperature before adding the infant formula.
- Baby bottles should not be heated in the microwave as the liquid may heat unevenly and can cause burns to your infant.
- Health Canada recommends that breast milk is the best food for optimal growth in newborns and infants. Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of life for healthy term infants with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond.
- If breastfeeding is not chosen, canned infant formula is still the best choice, as the nutritional benefits far outweigh possible risk.
- If parents and caregivers are still concerned about using polycarbonate baby bottles, there are a number of alternative options.

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