

# How to Protect Your Baby From BPA (Bisphenol A)



## WHAT IS BPA?

BPA (Bisphenol A) is a chemical used to make a kind of plastic called polycarbonate. BPA is also used to make the linings in almost all canned food and drinks, including cans of liquid infant formula.

This brochure will explain what BPA is, why you need to know about it, and how you can protect yourself and your family from it.

## WHY IS BPA USED IN SOME FOOD AND DRINK CONTAINERS?

BPA has been used because it is strong, lightweight, and long-lasting. Linings made from BPA keep food and drink cans from rusting and increase the shelf life of canned products.

## ARE THERE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM EXPOSURE TO BPA?

Laboratory animal studies suggest that low levels of BPA may be harmful to the normal development of babies and infants under the age of 2.

## WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE HEALTH EFFECTS OF BPA?

Possible health effects include, but are not limited to changes in the infant's developing nervous system, such as thyroid function and brain growth; changes in behavioral development, such as hyperactivity; and changes in the normal development of the prostate gland.

## HOW ARE BABIES AND INFANTS EXPOSED TO BPA?

Infants can be exposed to BPA in two ways:

- A small amount of BPA can pass from the lining in a can if it was made from BPA into the liquid formula and can be consumed by a child.
- BPA can also pass into an infant's formula or milk from certain types of plastic baby bottles when hot water is added directly into the bottle.

During pregnancy, babies can also be exposed to BPA from their mother. This could happen if the mother swallows BPA that has passed from a can or plastic container she eats or drinks from.

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MY BABY FROM BPA?

- Avoid BPA while you are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Breastfeed or consider powdered formula.
- Don't heat plastic bottles.
- Use bottles that don't have BPA in them.

## HOW CAN PREGNANT AND BREASTFEEDING WOMEN AVOID BPA?

Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should consider:

- Eating fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables instead of canned products.
- Not heating food or drinks in polycarbonate plastic containers.
- Replacing any aged, scratched, or clouded polycarbonate plastic containers, including water bottles.

## WHY SHOULD I BREASTFEED OR CONSIDER POWDERED FORMULA?

Breastfeeding is best for the health of you and your baby. If you aren't able to breastfeed, consider using powdered formula.

Use a bottle that doesn't have BPA. If you are not sure whether the bottle has BPA in it:

- Don't put hot liquids in the bottle
- Don't heat the bottle in the microwave or on the stove
- Don't wash it in the dishwasher

**If your baby needs a special formula for medical reasons, don't make any changes without talking to your doctor.**

#### **WHAT ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO ADDRESS BPA?**

- In 2009, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued a formal consumer advisory about the potential health effects of BPA.
- In 2010, Massachusetts banned the production or sale of children's reusable food or beverage containers that contain BPA (105 CMR 650.020).
- In 2012-2013, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) amended the food additive regulations (21 CFR Part 177.1580) to eliminate the use of polycarbonate (PC) resins in infant feeding bottles (baby bottles), spill-proof cups, and packaging for infant formula.

#### **ARE BPA-CONTAINING CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS STILL AVAILABLE?**

Although regulations have been passed, it is possible that some BPA-containing children's products may be available from retailers unaware of the ban or from those who may have purchased these items before the ban was in effect.

#### **HOW DO I KNOW IF A BOTTLE HAS BPA IN IT?**

Polycarbonate, the kind of plastic that contains BPA, is hard and clear. It may also be tinted with a color.

To find out if a bottle has BPA in it, look for a code on the bottom. If you see a #7 recycling symbol and the letters "PC", the bottle contains BPA. Not all #7 plastics contain BPA, but if the bottle is clear, hard plastic (or has a tinted color), it could contain BPA.



Glass or stainless steel bottles do not have BPA in them. There are also several kinds of plastic baby bottles that do not have BPA. However, studies on BPA-free products are too limited to recommend one product over another. Taking steps to avoid heating food or drink in plastic containers can reduce the likelihood of exposure to chemicals contained in plastics.

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## Whom can I contact for additional information?

You may contact the Department of Public Health's Environmental Toxicology Program:

**Bureau of Environmental Health  
MA Department of Public Health**  
250 Washington Street, 7th Floor, Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: 617-624-5757 | Fax: 617-624-5777 | TTY: 617-624-5286  
[www.mass.gov/dph/environmental\\_health](http://www.mass.gov/dph/environmental_health)

