



What is Bisphenol A (BPA)? Should I be worried about it?

If you're a parent and you've been watching the news recently, you've probably heard something about BPA – most likely in relation to baby bottles and hard plastic toys. But what's all the fuss about? Should you be worried about your child's health? Is it all much ado about nothing? Your best bet is to get informed. Here are some answers provided by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Question 1: What is Bisphenol A?

Answer: Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical produced in large quantities that is used primarily in the production of polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins. Polycarbonate is strong and durable, but over time it may break down from overuse at high temperatures.

Question 2: Where is BPA found?

Answer: BPA is found in a wide variety of common products including CDs and DVDs, electronic equipment, automobiles, sports safety equipment, reusable food and drink containers, and medical devices. Because of its toughness and ability to withstand high heat, BPA is often used in protective liners of food containers, in water and infant bottles, and in other food packaging. BPA can also be found in metal products such as bottle tops and water supply pipes. Some dental sealants and composites may also contribute to BPA exposure. Polycarbonate containers that contain BPA usually have the recycling number 7 on the bottom. (http://www.recyclenow.org/r_plastics.html)

Question 3: How does BPA get into the body?

Answer: The primary source of exposure to BPA for most people is through diet. While air, dust and water are other possible sources of exposure, BPA absorbed from food and beverage containers accounts for the majority of human exposure.

Source: National Institutes of Health <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/media/questions/sya-bpa.cfm>

Question 4: Why are people concerned about BPA?

Answer: Generally speaking, families are concerned about BPA because some animal studies report effects to fetuses and newborns that have been exposed to BPA. Human exposure to BPA is widespread.

Question 5: If I am concerned, what can I do to prevent exposure to BPA?

Answer: Some studies suggest that infants and children may be most vulnerable to the effects of BPA. Parents can make the personal choice to reduce exposure of BPA for their families. Below are some ways to reduce BPA exposure:

- Avoid microwaving food and beverages in polycarbonate plastic containers
- Reduce use of canned foods
- Use glass, porcelain or stainless steel containers, particularly for hot food or liquids, when possible
- Use BPA-free baby bottles and sippy cups

At UL, we know that your family's safety is the most important thing to you. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not recommended consumers to discontinue the use of products with BPA at this time, but does encourage concerned consumers to learn more about alternatives. Visit <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm064437.htm> for up-to-date information about BPA.