

Bisphenol A

Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical that has been used in the manufacture of polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins for more than 50 years. Polycarbonates are used to make products such as compact discs, automobile parts, baby bottles, plastic dinnerware, eyeglass lenses, toys, and impact-resistant safety equipment. Epoxy resins containing BPA are used in protective linings of some canned food containers, wine vat linings, epoxy resin-based paints, floorings, and some dental sealants and composites.

People are exposed to BPA primarily by eating foods from containers whose lining contains BPA. Small children may be exposed by consuming foods from containers lined with BPA-containing materials, drinking from polycarbonate plastic baby bottles, and through hand-to-mouth and direct oral contact with plastic materials (like toys) that contain BPA. The amount of BPA to which people are exposed is estimated to be much lower than the amount of BPA exposure considered safe by government agencies.

Some scientific studies have suggested that BPA, like soy and phthalates (chemicals added to plastics to increase flexibility and durability), may affect reproduction and development in animals by mimicking the effects of the female hormone estrogen. This has raised concerns about its safety. To date, these effects have not been observed in humans, and are questionable at the exposure levels resulting from consumer products.