



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

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Bye Bye, BPA

www.breastcancerfund.org

Bisphenol A, or BPA, has gotten a lot of bad press lately- and for good reason: BPA is a toxic chemical so powerful it can cross the placenta, even at exceedingly low levels of exposure. It's a synthetic estrogen that increases the risk of breast cancer and may interfere with chemotherapy. And it's perfectly legal to use in food and beverage containers.

But not for long.

On March 13, 2009, Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-California) and Rep. Edward Markey (D-Massachusetts) introduced legislation that would ban BPA in food and beverage containers. The Breast Cancer Fund worked closely with the legislators to help craft a strong bill that is responsive to the concerns of the breast cancer community.

The legislation comes on the heels of unprecedented pushback against BPA this March. Sunoco became the first chemical manufacturer to acknowledge health concerns when it recently announced that it will sell BPA only to companies that guarantee the chemical will not be used in food and water containers for children under 3. Health Canada released results showing that BPA was detected in 96% of soft drink cans the agency tested. Six baby bottle manufacturers said they would stop using BPA. Nineteen states and four municipalities have introduced, or are planning to introduce, legislation to regulate BPA. "There is a deep sense of public outrage around BPA," said Janet Nudelman, director of program and policy at the Breast Cancer Fund. "Scientists across the board are saying we have enough evidence of harm to act, consumers say they don't want the chemical, and retailers and manufacturers are getting the message. Now Congress needs to pass this bill. There's no excuse for continued federal inaction."

A main route of exposure to BPA is through food and beverage containers. It is used in the epoxy resin that lines metal food cans and can also be found in some plastic food storage containers, baby bottles and water bottles. BPA can leach into infant formula and other food products, especially when heated. Once in food, BPA can move quickly into people. Nearly 200 scientific studies show that exposures to low doses of BPA, particularly during prenatal development and early infancy, are associated with a wide range of adverse health effects later in life. BPA has been linked to breast and prostate cancer, birth defects, infertility in men, early puberty in girls, diabetes and obesity.

“Americans should not be used as guinea pigs by chemical companies while we wait for even more scientific evidence showing this chemical is harmful to our health,” said Sen. Feinstein. “The time has come to take action.”

Tips for Reducing Your Family’s BPA Exposure

- ***Check kids’ plastics first:*** Developing children are particularly sensitive to the hormone-disrupting effects of BPA. Though many major manufacturers have stopped making baby bottles with BPA- and retailers have stopped selling them- you may still have old plastic bottles at home. Check the code on the bottom of these products and replace #7 plastics with glass or BPA-free plastic versions. Also replace sippy cups and children’s dishes and utensils with BPA-free alternatives.
- ***Choose fresh or frozen over canned:*** Soups, beans, infant formula and other food packaged in cans may leach BPA from the can lining. Alternatives are available but not widely labeled. Some infant formula manufacturers have developed or are working on BPA-free products. Check with the manufacturers for more information about individual products.
- ***Don’t heat plastic:*** Heat and wear increase leaching of chemicals from plastic. Don’t microwave or otherwise heat food or drink in plastic dishes, cups, sports bottles or baby bottles.
- ***Replace old or worn plastic dishes and bottles:*** Upgrade your old sports bottle with one of the many new models labeled BPA-free.

If you would like more information about First Things First or early childhood development and health, please feel free to contact Rochelle Lacapa, Regional Coordinator at (928) 532-5041 or via email at rlacapa@azftf.gov.