



# BPA and Phthalates

## Chemicals found in our homes

### Information and Tips

#### What are BPA and phthalates (THAL-ates)?

**Bisphenol A (BPA)** is used in some hard, clear plastics such as water bottles and baby bottles and in the lining of food cans.

**Phthalates** are used to make soft, flexible plastics such as PVC (“vinyl”) products and food packaging. They are also used to make fragrances found in beauty and skin care products.

#### Bisphenol A (BPA) can be found in:

- Food can linings (used to keep the metal from rusting).
- Polycarbonate plastic food and drink containers, especially older products (BPA is being removed from many newer products).
- Thermal/carbonless receipts.
- Some dental sealants that are applied in the dentist office.

#### Phthalates can be found in:

- Food production and storage containers (such as conveyer belts, jar lids, tubing, gloves, and packaging). Processed foods and high fat dairy and meats have higher levels.
- Beauty and skin care products (such as shampoos, lotions, makeup, and perfume) and in fragrances used in these products.
- PVC building materials and dust generated from these materials.
- Plastic medical devices (IV tubing, IV fluid/total parenteral nutrition bags, catheters).
- Coatings on some medications.
- Household products made from vinyl (such as shower curtains, toys, and tablecloths).

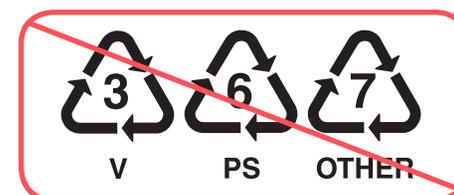
#### Take these simple steps to help lower your exposure:

- Do not microwave foods or drinks in plastic.
- Look for beauty and skin care products that are phthalate or fragrance free.
- Use less canned and processed foods. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables when possible.
- Store food and drinks in non-plastic containers, such as glass, stainless steel, or ceramic.
- Don't put hot liquids in plastic containers. Get rid of older plastic containers, such as water and baby bottles, which are more likely to contain BPA.
- Avoid buying vinyl products.
- When possible, purchase items that are labeled BPA and phthalate free.
- Avoid the plastics marked 3 (PVC or vinyl), 6 (polystyrene foam), or 7 (can contain BPA). Choose safer plastics marked 1, 2, 4, 5.

#### Safer plastics:



#### NO! Plastics to avoid:



## How can my family be exposed to BPA and phthalates?

Almost everyone in the U.S. is exposed to these chemicals from their diet. For example, BPA from metal can linings and plastic bottles and phthalates from food packaging can get into food, drinks, and water. People can be exposed to phthalates from using products made of certain plastics and from beauty and skin care products.

Infants and children are more sensitive to chemicals than adults because their bodies are still developing. They have higher exposures because they eat more food, drink more water and breath more air for their size compared to adults. Children can also come into contact with these chemicals by putting things in their mouths and from crawling on the floor.



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## Why is it important to lower exposure to BPA and phthalates?

Many doctors and scientists are concerned about BPA and phthalates because they can interfere with normal growth and brain development. Exposures in the womb and during childhood can lead to health problems later in life.

Studies find that phthalates may increase allergies and change how male reproductive organs develop. BPA may cause behavior problems in children and has been linked to asthma, obesity, and diabetes.

**For more information, visit:**  
**[www.doh.wa.gov/biomonitoring](http://www.doh.wa.gov/biomonitoring)**