



# Bisphenol – A (BPA)

## Frequently Asked Questions For Families

*The Multnomah County Board of Health has banned the sale of certain products made with BPA to reduce community exposure. The law bans the sale of all reusable beverage containers that are made with BPA, these include sports bottles, baby bottles, sippy cups and reusable water bottles. The ban will not include one-time use containers or commercial grade containers.*

- **What is BPA?** Bisphenol-A (BPA) is a chemical used in the making of hard plastics called polycarbonates. Polycarbonates are used in everyday products like reusable water bottles, baby bottles and some food storage containers. BPA is also used in the coating found in many canned food and beverage containers. BPA can be released, or leach into beverages and food stored in these containers.
- **Is BPA harmful?** Many studies have shown that low-level exposure to BPA is linked to health complications such as developmental disorders, thyroid dysfunction, cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, reproductive problems and liver complications. Children's smaller body size and immature metabolism may also put them at greater risk.
- **Where do I make a complaint?** Enforcement of the ban is complaint driven. If you suspect a business is selling reusable beverage containers made with BPA please file a complaint by contacting **Multnomah County Health Department – Code Enforcement at (503) 988-3464.**
- **How do I choose safe products?** When choosing a beverage container for you or your child consider the following:
  - Look for containers made from materials like stainless steel or glass.
  - Look for container's that state "BPA-free"
  - Avoid containers with no recycling code or label
  - Avoid containers with the #7 and/or "PC" inside the recycling code
- **How do I know if a plastic container is made with BPA?** To tell if a container is made with BPA, look for a code on the bottom. Plastics are usually marked with a number inside a triangle on the bottom of a container, which is called the recycling code. If you see a #7 and/or the letters "PC", the container may be made with BPA. Plastics with the numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 are not made with BPA. Manufacturers are not required to label a container "BPA-Free". If you are unsure whether a container is made from BPA, you may try to contact the manufacturer.



- **How am I exposed to BPA in food and beverage containers?** Small amounts of BPA may remain in polycarbonate products and epoxy linings and can be released into food and beverages. Canned foods and liquids stored or heated in polycarbonate containers and epoxy-lined cans appear to be the main source of exposure to BPA. Baby bottles and sippy cups containing BPA may leach when they are heated or hot water is poured directly into them.
- **How can I reduce my and my child's exposure to BPA?** You can reduce exposure to BPA by using products such as bottles and reusable food containers that are not made with BPA. Alternatives include containers made of stainless steel, glass or BPA-free plastics. Many manufacturers have already stopped using BPA in their products. To further reduce your exposure remember the following:
  - Avoid heating foods or beverages in containers made with polycarbonate.
  - Avoid placing hot foods or liquids into containers made with polycarbonate.
  - **For Breastfeeding infants:** Breastfeeding your infant gives them health benefits that last a lifetime. Exposure to BPA through breast-milk is thought to be minimal compared to epoxy-lined canned formula. Women can reduce their baby's exposure to BPA from breastmilk by limiting their use of polycarbonate plastic containers and consumption of canned food.
- **Who do I contact if I have more questions?**

Contact Matt Davis, Health Educator  
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(503) 988-3663 ext. 26966