

News



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Connecticut Department of Public Health
Contact: William Gerrish
(860) 509-7270

Pregnant Women and Families with Young Children Warned About Bisphenol A (BPA)

Baby Bottles, Plastic Containers and Canned Food Can Contain Chemical

Hartford – The Connecticut Departments of Public Health (DPH) and Consumer Protection (DCP) are advising pregnant women and families with young children to be aware of dietary sources of bisphenol A (BPA) and to minimize these exposures where possible. This advisory is a follow-up to last week's statement from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in which a concern was raised for BPA effects on the developing fetus and infants.

"There still remains considerable uncertainty about BPA's health effects," stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin. "Given the potential for health risks, it's prudent to prevent exposure in children. The recently passed law which bans BPA from certain children's products in Connecticut will not take effect until next fall, however, there are simple ways to decrease exposure to this chemical."

"Manufacturers have been proactive on this issue for many new products, but consumers should be aware that older manufactured products may likely contain BPA," DCP Commissioner Jerry Farrell, Jr. said. "For example, rather than reusing older baby bottles, consumers may consider replacing these with glass or newer products."

BPA is a chemical used in certain types of baby bottles, plastic storage containers and the lining of canned food. Tiny amounts can migrate from the packaging and contaminate the food or liquid. BPA is an endocrine disruptor which acts like estrogen in the body and some studies suggest it can cause abnormal development and promote cancer and obesity. The concern is highest for babies in the womb and shortly after birth. The data on BPA health effects are controversial and more research is planned.

Pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and infants can decrease BPA exposure by taking the following steps:

- Choose breastfeeding over bottle-feeding.
- If you bottle-feed your baby:
 - Use BPA-free baby bottles

- Consider powdered rather than liquid formula, unless recommended to use liquid formula by your doctor.
- For those who pump breastmilk, be sure to store it in BPA-free containers.
- Limit your intake of canned food and drinks – choose fresh foods whenever possible and also choose frozen or dried foods over canned foods where possible.
- Do not microwave food in plastic containers – BPA has been found to leach out of a variety of plastic containers, even some that are “microwave safe”.
- Avoid drinking out of hard clear plastic (polycarbonate or PC) water bottles. Stainless steel and glass drinking vessels are BPA-free.
- Do not use plastic drinking or food storage containers that are scratched.

Last year, the Connecticut legislature passed [Public Act 09-103](#) banning BPA from baby bottles, infant formula cans and reusable food containers beginning October 1, 2011 (the legislation allows for existing products to remain on the shelves until 10/1/2012.)

For additional information on BPA:

- US Food and Drug Administration Update on BPA:
<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm197739.htm>
- DPH Fact Sheet:
http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/environmental_health/eoha/pdf/plastics_primer_final.pdf

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state’s leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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