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It's Your Oregon

Guide to Safer Children's Products

Thousands of children's toys have been recalled recently because of lead paint. But lead is not the only worry. Many other chemicals used in children's products also pose health risks. Two of these are bisphenol A and phthalates. Both chemicals disrupt hormones in the human body.

Children are more vulnerable

Child development is a delicate biological process, guided in part by the body's own hormones acting at exquisitely low levels and affecting every cell, organ and function of the human body. Exposures to chemicals like phthalates and bisphenol- A during critical times in development can disrupt this delicate process, resulting in life long health impacts.

PHTHALATES (pronounced thal-ates) are plasticizers used to soften vinyl products like teething rings, toys,* raincoats and bibs. It's also an ingredient in scented baby products and toiletries (soaps, shampoos and lotions). Children can ingest phthalates when they chew on vinyl products or inhale them from personal care products.

Phthalate exposure has been linked to demasculinization[1,2], low sperm count[3], adverse genital development in boys[4], hypospadias[5], premature breast development in girls[6], shortened length of pregnancy[7], and the development of asthma and rhinitis.[8] Both human and animal studies support adverse effects from exposure to phthalates.

BISPHENOL-A (BPA) is a chemical component of polycarbonate plastic used to make plastic toys, baby bottles and "sippy" cups. It is also used to line metal food cans, including infant formula cans. Children can ingest BPA that leaches out of these products.

Animal studies link early exposure to bisphenol-A to breast cancer[9], prostate cancer[10], hyperactivity[11], obesity[12], low sperm counts[13], miscarriage[14], immune system alterations[15], insulin resistance[16], reproductive malformation[17], and more.

**Note: U.S. law prohibits phthalates in new children's toys, effective January 1, 2009. Phthalates could still be present in used toys.*

Body Burden

Hundreds of unwanted synthetic chemicals are present in the human body. They pass from mother to baby and are found in umbilical cord blood, as well as breast milk. They build up with the potential for long term health impacts. BPA is found in the bodies of over 95% of Americans (children have the highest levels) and phthalates have been found in 100% of the population tested. These chemicals do not belong in our children's toys and they definitely do not belong in our bodies.

Low Doses Matter

Product manufacturers often claim that exposures to hormone disrupting chemicals don't matter because the doses are so low. Emerging science shows that low doses do indeed matter. For example, BPA causes adverse effects on mammary cells at levels 2000 times lower than the EPA "safety" level, which is 50.0 parts per billion.[18]

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www.oeconline.org/our-work/kidshealth

There are Safer Products

Chemical manufacturers and government agencies are still arguing that exposures are too small to have any ill effects. They said that about lead 50 years ago. Now we know better. Taking precautions is common sense. Choose products without toxic ingredients to protect the health and development of your children.

Forgo the fragrance.

Phthalates are a common ingredient in cosmetics and personal care products. Read the label and watch for DMP, diethyl phthalate (DEP), DBP and fragrance. Companies can legally list "fragrance" as an ingredient without identifying what exactly is in the fragrance. Since phthalates are often used as a fragrance fixative, play it safe and go fragrance-free. Search for specific products at SkinDeep.org.

Breast Milk is best.

Hands down, breast milk is the healthiest and most cost effective first food. Some plastic baby bottles and breast milk storage units contain BPA and some infant formula cans are lined with plastic resins that leach BPA. Use glass bottles or those made from safer plastic. If you use formula, opt for powdered, which is less likely to absorb BPA from the lining of the can. (See insert for specific products.)

Get to know your plastics.

Plastics are commonplace in modern society, but some types of plastics are safer than others.

Safer choices: 1 PETE, 2 HDPE, 4 LDPE, 5 PP

Avoid: 3 V, 6 PS, 7 PC

Not all #7 plastics are polycarbonate. Since #7 is a catch all category for plastics that don't fit into the #1-6 categories, it is used for polycarbonate, plastic mixtures, polyamide, co-polyester, and also the new bio-based PLA plastic. If a #7 product is labeled PC, it's polycarbonate and contains BPA. If it's not labeled, you may have to contact the manufacturer to determine the type of plastic.

BAD:

PVC/vinyl raincoats, backpacks, bibs, boot and toys like teethers and rubber duckies

Polycarbonate bottles, sippy cups, baby dishes and utentsils

BETTER:

Melamine dishes, polyethylene, polypropylene or polyamide bottles

BEST:

Glass bottles, ceramic dishes, toys made of wood or cloth

Better Safe Than Sorry

We all do our best to prevent harm. We use car seats and child gates to protect young children. Taking steps to reduce exposure to synthetic chemicals is exactly the same. You may have unknowingly used products containing risky chemicals, but you can make safer choices to prevent future exposures by following the tips in this consumer guide.

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Be a conscious cook.

You can use plastics, but you don't need to eat them. Only use glass or ceramic in the microwave or for serving warm foods. Store foods in glass, ceramic or safer plastics (1,2,4, or 5 - be sure to let the food cool down). Don't store acidic foods like tomato sauce or fatty foods like gravy in plastic. Discard worn plastic containers and hand wash plastic so it doesn't get worn out so quickly. Purchase fresh or frozen foods since many cans (even some labeled "organic") are lined with a resin that contains BPA.

Shop smart.

Why buy questionable products when safer alternatives are widely available? Purchase products made from safer materials like wooden and cloth toys or glass, stainless steel and ceramic containers. Use the websites below to find lists of specific products.

- HealthyLegacy.org: Find out more about safer products and how to make your school, your community and our world a safer place for children.
- HealthyToys.org: This easy–to-use database of over 1,200 toys reveals levels of five contaminants of concern: lead, mercury, cadmium, chlorine, and arsenic.
- BPA.zrecs.com: Z Recommends has published two reports on BPA-free children's products and they are continually updating their information
- Safecosmetics.org: A database for finding safer personal care products.

Contact your elected officials.

Encourage them to enact policies that protect public health from toxic chemicals in consumer products, especially in products designed for children.

Clip and Carry

Pocket Guide to Safe Children's Products

Plastics

- Choose safer plastics: Safer choices Avoid

1 PETE, 2 HDPE, 4 LDPE, 5 PP — Safer choices

3 V, 6 PS, 7 PC — Avoid

Personal Care Products

- Read the label: Purchase products that don't contain DMP, diethyl phthalate (DEP), DBP, or fragrance

Unlabeled Products? Make a Call

- Text "zrecs" plus a company name and products category to 69866 to find out if a product contains BPA.
- Text "healthytoys" and the name of the toy, toy manufacturer or retailer to 41411 to find out if a toy contains toxins.
- Look for the 1-800 number on the product box and call the manufacturer

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BETTER:

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BEST:

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Safer Baby Products

(used for feeding, teething or soothing)

Bottles

Adiri: Natural Nursers
Avent: "Via" disposable
Babisil: Silbottles
BornFree
Dr. Brown's glass and polypropylene
EvenFlo: Glass, colored or opaque plastic
Gerber: Clear View, Fashion Tint
Gentle Flow
Green to Grow
Mead Johnson: cleft palate feeders
Medela
Mother's Milkmate
Munchkin: Dora the Explorer Classic
Nuby: 7oz Standard Neck Bottle with Non-Drip Nipple, 11oz Standard Neck Bottle with Non-Drip Nipple, 8oz Wide Neck Bottle with Non-Drip Nipple, 10oz Wide Neck Bottle with Handles and Non-Drip Nipple, 7oz Standard Neck Bottle with Handles and Non-Drip Nipple, 10 oz 3 Stage Wide Neck Easy Grip Feeding System with Non-Drip Nipple; Insulated Soft Silicone Spout Cup, 10 oz Soft Spout Easy Grip Cup/ Gripper Cup, 12 oz Mega Sipper with Fat Flip-It Straw Top, 14oz New Style Gripper Cup with Soft Silicone Spout, 10oz 2 Handle Cup, 11 oz Insulated Magic Motion Cup With Fat Flip-It Straw Top, Tinted Mega Sipper; Screw-On Lid with Silicone Spout and Cover, Insulated 9 oz Cup with Fat Flip-It Straw Cup, 12 oz No-Spill Sports Sipper, 7oz Tumblers
Parent's Choice: (available at Wal-Mart – should be marked BPA-free)
Playtex: Opaque Soft, Nurser, and Drop-Ins (all Playtex products by the end of 2008)
Sassy MAM: (UltiVent), Baby Food Nurser Kit
ThinkBaby

Sippy Cups

Avent: Magic Cups, Super Sport Cups
Boon Sippy
BornFree
First Years: Take N Toss Cups, Take N Toss Insulated Cups, Spill-Proof Sports Bottle, Trainer Tumblers Fluid No-Spill Sippy, FUNtainer Straw Bottles
Gerber: Sip & Smile, Easy Grip Insulated Soft Straw Cup, Insulated Cool Cup, Fun Grips Color Change Spill-Proof Cup, Fun Grips Color Change Spill-proof cup, Grins & Giggles Spill-proof cup, Fun Grips Lil Sport Bottles Spill Proof Bottle, Lil Trainer Toddler Cup, Insulated Cool Cup
GrowPure Multi-Stage Feeder and Sippy Cup
iPlay Aqua Bottle
Kid Basix's The Safe Sippy
Kleen Kanteen
Medela
Munchkin: Cupsicle, Cupsicle Straw Cup, Big Kid Sippy Cup, Mighty Grip Flip Straw Cup, Mighty Grip Trainer Cup, licensed character Sports Bottles, Re-usable Straw Cups, Re-usable Spill-proof Cups
Nuby: 10 oz 3 Stage Wide Neck Easy Grip Feeding System with Non-Drip Nipple; Insulated Soft Silicone Spout Cup, 10 oz Soft Spout Easy Grip Cup/ Gripper Cup, 12 oz Mega Sipper with Fat Flip-It Straw Top, 14oz New Style Gripper Cup with Soft Silicone Spout, 10oz 2 Handle Cup, 11 oz Insulated Magic Motion Cup With Fat Flip-It Straw Top, Tinted Mega Sipper; Screw-On Lid with Silicone Spout and PP Cover, Insulated 9 oz Cup with Fat Flip-It Straw Cup, 12 oz No-Spill Sports Sipper, 7oz Tumblers
Playtex: Coolster Tumbler, Insulator, Einstein Training Cup, Sipster, Create My Own, Quick Straw, Insulator Sport, Sip and Discover, First Sipster (all sippies by the end of 2008)
The First Years: Take & Toss, Spill-proof Cup, Insulated Cup, Licensed character sippy cups, Insulated Spill-proof Cup, 2 Handled Cups
Sassy Spill-Proof Cups Sassy Snack Time Infa-Trainer Cup
Sigg
Thermos' Foogo
Think Baby Training Cup

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Utensils and Dishes

First Years: Take N Toss Bowls, Suction Bowl with Lid, Snap Apart Dish, 3-Piece Feeding Sets
Ideal Temp Feeding Spoons
Less Mess Toddler Spoons, Toddler Bowls
Temperature Sensitive Forks and Spoons
Munchkin
Nuby
Stroll 'N Snack Cups
Sassy
Boon Feeding Utensils and Dishes
TreBimbi Dinnerware Sets
Construction Eating Utensils

Food & Breastmilk Containers

Fresh Baby Food & Milk Trays
Baby Cubes Breastmilk and Food Storage
Mother's Milkmate Breastmilk Storage System
Thermos' Foogo Stainless Steel Leak Proof Food Jar
Avent Via 8-oz. Nurser Kit, Snack Cup/Formula Dispenser
Medela Milk Storgae Bottles and Breastpump Accessories
Playtex Breastmilk Storage Kit
Lansinoh ® Breastmilk Storage Bags
BioBag
Diamant Food Wrap
Fresh Baby

Note:
Oregon Environmental Council does not endorse any of these products. This list addresses only products that are free from bisphenol-A and phthalates and only those most commonly associated with these chemicals. There are other products that may contain these chemicals whose safer alternatives did not make this list. This is not a comprehensive list and manufacturers continue to phase out using these chemicals due to consumer pressure, so if you have a question about a specific product you don't find here, call the manufacturer.

Pacifiers

Natursutten
Playtex "Binky" (one piece silicone pacifier)
Gerber Opaque Face Plates with Silicone NUKs
The First Years Soothies Silicone Paci's
Vice Versa Binky w/ Case

Teethers

Bright Stars: Chill and Teeth Tubes, Licensed to Drool, Rattle and Spin teethers, fun links
Combi Teethers
Fisher Price: Laugh & Learn Learning Keys, Rainforest Monkey Teether, Rainforest Giraffe Rainstick Rattle, Miracles & Milestones Musical Zebra, Miracles & Milestones Sunshine Activity Ring, Miracles & Milestones Penguin Water Teether, Lil' Laugh & Learn 1-2-3 Puppy Rattle
Gerber: Cooling Gum Soother, Cool Fish Soother, Cool Ring Soother, OrbiTeether
Je Je Vibrating Teether (rubber)
Luv n' Care Icy Bite Teether
Leapfrog Gentle Vibes teether
Learning Curve: Cool Triangle Teether, Floating Friends, Soft teething beads, First Keys
Nuby
Sassy: Sassy Jelly Fish Teethers, Sassy Coolin' Teether, Sassy Chilly Dilly Daisy, Sassy Teething Feeder, Sassy Teach Me Toothbrush Set, Sassy Teething Tunes, Sassy Gummy Guppy, Sassy Earth Brites Natural Wooden Toys, Sassy Buzz n' Bites teether
Vulli

Food and Formula

Choose soups and soy milk packaged in cardboard "brick" cartons, by Tetra Pak and SIG Combibloc, which are made of safer layers of polyethylene (#2) and also recyclable.

The only canned food maker who does not use BPA in the lining of their can currently is Eden Foods

Opt for powdered (liquid absorbs more of the BPA from the container). Nestlé, Enfamil & Similac powdered only have BPA in top and bottom of can. Earth's Best & Bright Beginnings powdered have BPA in entire can.

Gerber baby food containers are BPA-free.

This guide was developed from the **Guide to Safer Children's Products** from Healthy Legacy visit their Web site at www.healthylegacy.org.