THE MOUNT SINAI INSTITUTE FOR EXPOSOMIC RESEARCH FACT SHEET

Bisphenol A

Bisphenol A, or BPA, is an industrial chemical added to polycarbonate plastics in order to make them more rigid. It is also used in the protective lining on some metal food and beverage cans and in thermal receipt paper.

HOW ARE WE EXPOSED TO BPA?

- BPA can be ingested after it seeps into foods and beverages from plastic containers and from the lining of cans. This is more likely to occur when these containers are exposed to heat and acidic contents.
- BPA can be absorbed through the skin following handling of cash register receipts.
- Exposure can occur from the use of certain medical devices and dental sealants that contain BPA.

WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF BPA?

BPA is an endocrine disruptor, meaning it can interfere with the hormone system to affect health in many ways. Children are more vulnerable to exposure to BPA than adults because their organ systems are still developing, they put their hands and objects in their mouths, and they have less varied diets.

- Hormone Disruption: Exposure to BPA has been shown to interfere with estrogen, testosterone, and thyroid hormones.
- Behavioral Problems: Children's exposure to BPA may alter brain development and lead to behavioral problems such as hyperactivity and reduced attention.
- Chronic Diseases: BPA may contribute to the development of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY EXPOSURE TO BPA?

- Avoid plastics with a #7 recycling symbol or labeled "PC" (polycarbonate).
- Use glass to heat and store food and avoid plastic containers.
- Use stainless steel or glass water bottles.
- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables and avoid canned goods.
- Choose toys and children's food/beverage containers labeled "BPA free."
- Choose e-receipts and minimize handling of cash register receipts.

Be a cautious consumer! As BPA is being phased out of some products due to health concerns, Bisphenol S (BPS) and Bisphenol F (BPF) are being used as replacements. Evidence suggests that BPS and BPF also interfere with the hormone system.

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This material was developed through the Mount Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center (www.cehcenter.org) and Transdisciplinary Center on Early Environmental Exposures (tceee.icahn.mssm.edu, NIEHS grant P30ES023515). As part of the Institute for Exposomic Research, we translate and connect our science to supporters and communities committed to ensuring a healthier future for all. To learn more about the Institute's research, visit icahn.mssm.edu/exposomics.

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