

# What Parents Should Know About Bisphenol-A (BPA)

## What is Bisphenol-A?

Bisphenol-A is a chemical used to make clear, hard plastics, including plastic baby bottles. The National Toxicology Program, a federal chemical research program has released a draft study stating that there is “some concern” that low-level exposure to **bisphenol-A has an impact on unborn babies, infants and small children.** “Some concern” is a carefully defined midpoint of a five-step spectrum ranging from “negligible” to “serious concern.”

BPA’s impacts include **insulin resistance, brain and behavioral impacts, early puberty, altered hormone levels, and other reproductive problems.** Laboratory studies consistently show that the most sensitive periods of exposure to BPA are during pregnancy and early life.



BPA is found in polycarbonate plastic food containers often marked on the bottom with a recycling label “7” and/or the letters “PC.” Polycarbonate plastics are rigid and transparent; soft or cloudy-colored plastic does not contain BPA. Not all #7 labeled products are polycarbonate, but this is a reasonable category of plastics to avoid.

## Other Sources of BPA to Avoid

Canned foods are a predominant source of daily BPA exposure in our lives. Food and drink cans **are lined with a BPA-containing plastic.**

Of the foods tested, **infant formula, chicken soup and ravioli had BPA levels of highest concern.** Just one to three servings per day of foods with these concentrations could expose a woman or child to BPA at levels that caused serious adverse effects in animal tests.

## Guide to Baby-Safe Bottles and Formula

Breast milk is best for your baby. If you use formula, follow these steps to minimize your baby’s exposure to BPA and other chemicals:

- **Nipples**—start with a clear silicone nipple. Latex rubber nipples can cause allergic reactions and contain impurities.
- **Bottle**—use glass or look for a brand labeled as BPA free.
- **Plastic bottle liners**—don’t use them. The soft plastic liners may leach chemicals into formula, especially when heated.
- **Formula**—*choose powdered.* The metal parts of formula cans are lined with a plastic containing BPA. Powdered formula is less likely to leach chemicals than liquid formula. Some brands, such as Nestle, Enfamil & Similac are only metal on the bottom and top of the can, and are a better choice than a formula that comes in an all-metal can. If you must use liquid formula, choose one that is concentrated, so you can dilute it with water. If you use ready-to-eat liquid formula, look for one in a plastic container.
- **Heating**—warm the bottle in a pan of hot water. Microwaving can heat unevenly and is more likely to cause chemicals to leach from the plastic bottle into the formula. BPA leaching from baby bottles filled with 78 to 176 degree water is less intense than everyday exposures from liquid formula.



Lists of BPA free baby products and instructions for using text-messaging to check for BPA in any baby product can be found on the web at [zrecs.blogspot.com/2008/03/bpa-wallet-card.html](http://zrecs.blogspot.com/2008/03/bpa-wallet-card.html)

