



What is the common food contaminant **BPA** and how can you avoid it?

▶ Learn more at [www.ewg.org/BPA](http://www.ewg.org/BPA)

### What is BPA?

Bisphenol A, or BPA, is an industrial chemical used to make two common synthetics:

**Polycarbonate**, a clear, rigid, shatter-resistant plastic found in a wide variety of consumer products, including food and drink containers.

**Epoxy resins**, used in industrial adhesives and high-performance coatings. Epoxy coating lines most of the 131 billion food and beverage cans made in the U.S. annually.

### What are its health risks?

BPA is a synthetic estrogen that can disrupt the endocrine system, even in small amounts. It has been linked to a wide variety of ills, including infertility, breast and reproductive system cancer, obesity, diabetes, early puberty, behavioral changes in children and resistance to chemotherapy treatments.

### BPA reaches children beginning in the womb

Surveys by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have found BPA in the bodies of nearly every person over the age of 6. In 2009, the Environmental Working Group detected BPA in 9 of 10 cord blood samples. Most of this contamination is believed to come from food packaging. BPA molecules leach into foods and beverage from plastic food containers and the epoxy linings of metal cans. See more at [www.ewg.org/bpa](http://www.ewg.org/bpa).

### How to limit your family's exposure to BPA

Completely eliminating contact with BPA is virtually impossible, but you can reduce your family's exposure to this chemical.

#### Canned Food

- Buy baby formula in plastic, glass or other non-metal containers. When possible, choose powdered formula because the packaging contains less BPA. If your baby needs liquid formula, look for brands sold in plastic or glass containers.
- Limit your consumption of canned food, particularly if you are pregnant.
- Look for canned food labeled as BPA-free or buy food packed in glass jars or waxed cardboard cartons. A few small companies sell cans lined with non-BPA alternatives

#### Hard plastic containers

- Repurpose old baby bottles, cups, dishes and food containers marked with the letters "PC," for polycarbonate, or recycling label #7. Not all #7 products are polycarbonate, but they may be.
- Do not microwave food in plastic containers.

### BPA in store receipts

EWG's tests of major retailers' store receipts, conducted in 2010, found that 40 percent were coated with BPA. The chemical can rub off on hands or food items. Some may be absorbed through the skin.

- Say no to receipts when possible
- Keep receipts in an envelope.
- Never give a child a receipt to hold or play with. For additional tips, see [ewg.org/bpa](http://ewg.org/bpa).