



About BPA

Questions & Answers About the Health Canada Report

Q: What did Health Canada announce about BPA in food contact materials?

A: On September 27, 2012, Health Canada announced that current exposures to BPA from food contact applications are not expected to pose a health risk, including for infants and children, and are lower than previously estimated. The announcement reconfirmed Health Canada's 2008 conclusion that dietary exposure to BPA does not pose a health risk.

Specifically, Health Canada's report states that:

"Health Canada's Food Directorate continues to conclude that current dietary exposure to BPA through food packaging uses is not expected to pose a health risk to the general population, including newborns and young children. This conclusion is consistent with those of other food regulatory agencies in other countries, including notably the United States, the European Union and Japan."

Q: What does it mean that exposures are lower than previously estimated?

A: It means that this new data verifies an even greater margin of safety between the "safe limits" set by government bodies and actual real-life exposures than had been previously estimated.

In September 2012, Health Canada published an updated estimate of human exposures to BPA from food contact materials. The new estimate of exposure from dietary intake of BPA was developed with Health Canada research on:

- dietary intake (the volume of food and drink ingested);
- consumption patterns (various types of food and drink that are ingested); and,
- concentrations of BPA in: canned drinks, bottled water, canned food, soft drinks and beer, and infant formula and baby food.

With the new data developed between 2009-2011, the agency estimated that total dietary intake of BPA is three times lower than estimated in Health Canada's 2008 finding that BPA is safe in food contact. This means that people are exposed to less BPA than previously estimated and that there is a greater margin of safety between BPA exposure levels and the safe consumption level set by government agencies, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), and Health Canada.

Importantly, the recent dietary intake exposure estimates are confirmed by the exposure estimates calculated from biomonitoring data in the 2007-2009 Canadian Health Measures Survey.

Q: Did Health Canada assess the safety of the large polycarbonate water bottles commonly used in water coolers?

A: Yes. Health Canada researched dietary exposure from water bottles and concluded that the consumption of water from polycarbonate containers commonly used in water coolers “does not pose a safety concern.” The agency estimates that an adult of average weight would have to consume 1,000 liters (approximately 264 U.S. gallons) per day of water from such containers to approach the safe levels set by Health Canada’s Food Directorate.

Q: What have other regulatory agencies said about BPA?

A: Multiple other regulatory bodies have reviewed the scientific research and concluded that BPA is safe for use in food-contact materials, including in products intended for infants and children. These authorities include:

- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand
- European Commission Risk Assessment Report
- Swiss Federal Office of Public Health
- Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
- Danish Environmental Protection Agency
- German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment
- Japanese National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology

Q: Didn’t Health Canada restrict the use of BPA in baby bottles in 2010?

A: Health Canada found that BPA exposure levels were not likely to cause health effects, but nonetheless used the precautionary principle to ban the use of BPA in baby bottles.

Health Canada stated:

“Science tells us that exposure levels are below those that could cause health effects; however, due to the uncertainty raised in some studies relating to the potential effects of low levels of bisphenol A, the Government of Canada is taking action to enhance the protection of infants and young children.”

Similar precautionary actions were taken in the EU, Brazil and Sweden, and in each case regulatory authorities made clear that their decisions did not reflect a judgment that BPA was unsafe in infant feeding products.

Q: Did FDA take regulatory action on BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups?

A: In July 2012, at the request of industry, FDA withdrew regulatory approval for the use of BPA in baby bottles and sippy cups because “regulatory authorization is no longer necessary” for these products. FDA clearly stated that this action was not based on health concerns, but on the fact that BPA-containing materials are no longer used in baby bottles and sippy cups in the market place.

More information on BPA is available at the following websites:

FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/FoodAdditivesIngredients/ucm355155.htm>

HHS: <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/sya-bpa>

ACC: <https://www.americanchemistry.com/industry-groups/polycarbonate-bisphenol-a-bpa-global-alliance>
www.factsaboutbpa.org

For more information about BPA, please contact
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