

Poisonous plastics

On yesterday's show, we told you about the potential risks of using baby bottles that contain the chemical Bisphenol A or B-P-A. (watch out for)

Now it seems other plastic products are raising the same concerns. General Practitioner Penny Adams joins the show.

Baby bottle risks

The chemical bisphenol-A (BPA) is widely used in plastics, particularly food and drink containers. There is some evidence to suggest that when these containers are heated, there is potential for these products to leech into the food or drink inside. There are a number of baby bottles on the market which may contain BPA, and some health experts believe these bottles should be banned from sale, which is the action Canada has taken in recent years.

What to look out for

- Recycling symbol and the number... Steer clear of number 7. Look for products that are BPA Free. Sometimes these details will be advertised on the packaging and not on the bottle or product itself, so make sure you check both.
- Also, avoid products with no number or symbol at all.

Other plastic products

There are a number of other plastics products which may contain harmful chemicals. Tinned or canned food is a major cause for concern. A lot of the cans now have plastic casings which contain epoxy resins, commonly identified by a number 3 or 7 on the tin. You should try and avoid products that have these numbers, but one of the major problems consumers are facing is that it's not mandatory for food companies to display these labels, so sometimes there's no way of knowing which plastic chemicals have been used in the packaging.

Cling wrap

PVC is a chemical used in some types of cling wrap to make it more soft and spreadable. It's often those used to wrap fresh meat and produce, particularly the kinds you find on your supermarket shelves, and also has the potential to leech into foods and cause health problems.

Buy your produce fresh from the greengrocer, and your meat from the butcher, so you can avoid your products having been encased in this wrapping for too long.

Q&A

WHAT IF MY BOTTLE HAS NOTHING ON IT?

Don't panic, it doesn't mean the product has BPA. I would steer clear of products where there is no identification or label, but some companies decide to place this information on the packaging instead of on the bottle. Basically next time you purchase a bottle, check both the packaging and the bottle before you buy.

MY BABY BOTTLE LABEL SAYS NUMBER 7 ... BUT THE PRODUCT IS ALSO BPA FREE. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

This means the product is perfectly fine. Just to clarify - number 7 doesn't always mean the product contains BPA, it's just a likely link. Check both the bottle and the packaging for this information, as it's sometimes left off the bottle.

WHAT ABOUT REGULAR WATER BOTTLES ... ARE THEY POTENTIALLY HARMFUL?

Regular water bottles are PET and classified as a number one plastic. These should be used only once and recycled straight after you're finished drinking from them. Buy yourself a stainless steel bottle if you'd like to re-use the same container over and over again.

BPA free baby bottles online - www.baby-bottles.com.au