

6 Simple Steps to Avoid BPA and Phthalates in Food

Plastics commonly used to make food storage containers can inadvertently leach hormone disrupting chemicals into food and drinks.



Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical often used in hard plastic bottles and the epoxy resin lining of food and beverage cans. It has been associated with effects on the developing brain, and breast and prostate cancer in laboratory studies.



Phthalates, such as DEHP, are chemicals used to make plastic soft, including plastic food wrap. DEHP has been shown to affect male reproductive development, sperm quality, and male hormone levels in laboratory and human studies.

While scientists continue to study the health effects of these chemicals, here are **6 simple steps to play it safe** and reduce your exposure:

✓ Fresh is best

BPA and phthalates can migrate from the linings of cans and plastic packaging into food and drinks. While it's not practical to avoid food packaging altogether, opt for fresh or frozen instead of canned food as much as possible.

✓ Eat in

Studies have shown that people who eat more meals prepared outside the home have higher levels of BPA. To reduce your exposure, consider cooking more meals at home with fresh ingredients. When you do eat out, choose restaurants that use fresh ingredients.

✓ Store it safe

Food and drinks stored in plastic can collect chemicals from the containers, especially if the foods are fatty or acidic. Next time, try storing your leftovers in glass or stainless steel instead of plastic.

✓ Don't microwave in plastic

Warmer temperatures increase the rate of chemicals leaching into food and drinks. So use heat-resistant glass or ceramic containers when you microwave, or heat your food on the stove. The label "microwave safe" means safety for the container, not your health.

✓ Brew the old-fashioned way

Automatic coffee makers may have BPA and phthalates in their plastic containers and tubing. When you brew your coffee, consider using a French press to get your buzz without the BPA.

✓ Take action

While we can each take steps to reduce our own exposure, it's important to join with others to call for healthier food packaging for everyone. Breast Cancer Fund (www.breastcancerfund.org) and Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families (www.saferchemicals.org) are leading national efforts to get chemicals of concern out of food packaging and other products.

