

Dodging Endocrine Disruptors

Want to reduce your exposure? Here are some tips.

- **Check the recycling number on the bottom of plastic bottles and containers.** Avoid:



No. 3—Vinyl or Polyvinyl chloride (PVC). It can contain phthalates.



No. 6—Polystyrene foam. (Styrofoam is one popular brand.) It contains styrene, a chemical that the International Agency for Research on Cancer calls a possible human carcinogen.



No. 7—Other. It's mostly polycarbonate, which contains BPA.



- **If it's convenient, wash plastic containers by hand,** to avoid the harsh detergents and high heat of the dishwasher. If you run them through the dishwasher, put them on the top shelf.
- **Use fewer canned foods.** The insides of most metal cans are coated with an epoxy resin that contains BPA. The resins used in most "BPA-free" cans may be no safer.
- **When possible, microwave in glass or ceramic.** If you microwave in plastic, try to avoid using polycarbonate (recycling number 7). And cover the food with a paper towel or a plate, not cling wrap.
- **If you keep food in plastic, you're better off with:**



PETE



HDPE



LDPE



PP

- **Try not to put very hot liquids or foods** into plastic containers.
- **Toss scratched plastic containers.** They may be more likely to leach harmful chemicals.
- **Avoid thermal paper.** Thermal printers use heat instead of ink. The paper has a slick, slightly shiny coating that contains BPA. So handle credit card and ATM receipts as little as possible.



Sources: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Environmental Working Group.

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