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New Baby Bottle Study Spurs Need for State Legislation

One baby bottle tested, purchased at a local Minnesota retailer

Minnesota based Healthy Legacy, along with environmental health organizations across the U.S. and Canada are calling for an immediate phase out of bisphenol A in food and beverage containers, based on the results of a new study that demonstrates the toxic chemical bisphenol A (BPA) leaches from plastic baby bottles when heated.

Bisphenol A (BPA), a synthetic sex hormone that mimics estrogen, is used to make hard polycarbonate plastic. Ninety-five percent of all baby bottles on the market are made with BPA. When heated, ten new bottles manufactured by Avent, Gerber, Playtex and Dr. Brown leached between 4.7 – 8.3 parts per billion of BPA in U.S. tests. Recent research shows that BPA can be harmful at doses below the levels found in the study.

"Leaching of bisphenol A from baby bottles, especially one purchased in Minnesota, is particularly alarming. The last thing a busy parent needs to worry about is finding a baby bottle that doesn't leach toxic additives" states Lindsay Dahl of Healthy Legacy. "Safer products exist; the next logical step is to phase out BPA from baby bottles and other children's products."

There are no existing safety standards regulating BPA under U.S. laws, even for products used by infants and young children. Nine states, including Minnesota, have introduced legislation that would restrict the use of BPA in children's products, including baby bottles.

"Regulation spurs innovation," states Representative Karen Clark, chief author of the Minnesota legislation. "Safer products already exist, all we need is the political will to do what's right to protect Minnesota children."

The Minnesota Healthy Children's Products bill authored by Representative Clark and Senator Rummel, would require a phase out of bisphenol A and phthalates (another hormone disrupting chemical) from products geared towards children ages three and under.

Studies conducted on laboratory animals and cell cultures show that bisphenol A is linked to obesity, diabetes, thyroid disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer and other illnesses, even at low doses. In addition to baby bottles, BPA is used to make toddler sippy cups, some Nalgene bottles, dental sealants, and the linings of food and beverage cans, including infant formula.

BPA exposure is widespread and has been found in 95% of Americans tested. It is found in breast milk, umbilical-cord blood, and placental tissue at levels found to be toxic to reproductive development of offspring in animal studies. Scientists, physicians, and public health professionals suspect that existing scientific evidence on BPA indicates a very real risk to human health.

Results of this study, "**Baby's Toxic Bottle: Bisphenol A Leaching from Popular Baby Bottles,**" contribute to a growing body of evidence that calls for immediate protective action to reduce public exposure to BPA, especially for infants and children. Last month, Michigan Representatives John Dingell and Bart Stupak launched a Congressional investigation to ascertain the safety of BPA used to line the cans of some infant formula products. Last week, a University of Cincinnati study confirmed that BPA leached from Nalgene bottles when heated.

For young mother Sara Grochowski, the new study confirms her fears that chemical contaminants are pervasive, and that until legislators and regulators take action to protect the public, consumers must protect

themselves.

"I consider myself to be a conscientious consumer and protective parent. I feel betrayed that our government would allow these chemicals to be in my child's baby bottle. I shouldn't have to do a research project to find a safe bottle." said Grochowski, who recently participated in a biomonitoring study that found BPA in her body. (See www.isitinus.org for more details.)

There are steps that can be taken to minimize your and your child's exposure to BPA, including:

- Use glass or polypropylene bottles (the #5 plastic) instead of polycarbonate (hard, shiny, clear or tinted plastic, usually with a number 7 or "PC" on the bottom/underside) bottles.
- If you continue to use polycarbonate bottles, do not use harsh detergents or put bottles in the dishwasher. Instead, clean them with warm soapy water and a sponge. Scouring brushes can scratch the surface of the bottles and increase leaching rates.
- Avoid heating foods in polycarbonate containers, as bisphenol A tends to leach faster with higher temperatures. Use glass or ceramic containers in the microwave instead of polycarbonate.
- Avoid use of infant formula brands in cans that use BPA as an epoxy liner (<http://www.ewg.org/reports/infantformula>).
- Cut back on consumption of canned foods and beverages to reduce exposure to bisphenol A contamination from the interior coating of the container. Also, avoid canned foods with higher fat content, which may have higher levels of bisphenol A.

Dahl concludes, "Passage of the Healthy Children's Products bill would ensure that Minnesota's baby bottles would be free of BPA, long before they hit the shelves."

Healthy Legacy is a statewide public health coalition that is working to eliminate toxic chemicals from our everyday products.

For more copies of report the and a list of our 26 member organizations visit: www.healthylegacy.org

"Baby's Toxic Bottle" was commissioned by the Canadian non-governmental agency Environmental Defence and released in the United States by the a coalition of public health and environmental non-governmental organizations including: Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, Boston Common Asset Management, Breast Cancer Fund, Center for Health, Environment and Justice, Clean New York, Clean Water Action, Environment America, Environmental Health Fund, Environmental Health Strategy Center, Healthy Legacy, Learning Disabilities Association of America, MOMS (Making Our Milk Safe), Oregon Environmental Council, and US PIRG.