

## **Hard Plastics**

In our last video, we talked about ways to reduce our exposure to all types of plastics and factors that impact plastic uptake. Now we are going to focus on tossing BPA and hard plastics.

### **Why would we want to toss BPA?**

In addition to health conditions mentioned in the previous video, the most widely documented effect of BPA is that it is an endocrine disruptor that mimics the structure and function of the hormone estrogen.

Estrogen dominance in women causes heavy painful periods, endometriosis, PMS, PCOS, depression, headaches, decreased sex drive, breast tenderness, fibroids, bloating, and more.

BPA can cause a woman to be more prone to miscarriage, birth defects, and earlier puberty in girls. Published data in Norway indicated that in 1861 the average age of starting a period was around 16. Today, American girls are reaching puberty around age 8, which makes them more vulnerable to breast cancer and other health issues later in life.

Estrogen dominance in men causes lower sperm counts, male breast growth, erectile dysfunction, abdominal weight gain, low libido, insomnia, fatigue, depression, and anxiety. Studies show that women with high BPA levels are 3-4 times less likely to become pregnant, and more likely to have a baby with genetic malformations and health difficulties. Men with high BPA levels have a much lower sperm count and the baby is again more likely to be affected.

Thankfully, there are things we can do! And it starts with awareness. We can't let these statements paralyze us with fear or make us want to live in denial, but instead motivate us to take action. Because as you will see, studies have shown that removal of these products results in a rapid exit of BPA from the body.

Now I'm going to address the most common items where BPA is found and ways we can minimize our exposure. Let's start with BPA in the kitchen.

First, water. Toss all your plastic water bottles and start drinking and storing water in glass. The big 3 or 5 gallon plastic water bottles are polycarbonate and have a plastic label with a 7, which means it contains BPA. A study of 77 Harvard College students found that one week of drinking water from polycarbonate bottles increased the level of BPA in their urine by two-thirds.

Food - Toss hard plastic food containers. We love reusing glass food jars like salsa and spaghetti sauce. Mason jars are also an inexpensive way to keep leftovers.

Toss or reduce exposure to hard plastic appliances like blenders, coffee makers, and food processors. For blenders, choose glass or stainless steel containers or a stainless steel immersion blender, or make sure that you implement the ways to reduce exposure discussed in the previous video.

Coffee makers. Remember that coffee is acidic, coffee is hot, and many people add oil, all factors that increase BPA levels in the coffee. Choose plastic free stainless steel or glass coffee makers. You don't want BPA in your daily coffee! That repetitive exposure could be a major factor in painful menstrual cramps or difficulty losing weight.

Food processors have BPA as well, but since we don't have glass or stainless steel alternatives, be mindful and process as quickly as possible - and always cool foods first.

Canned foods. BPA is found in the epoxy liner of canned foods. You might say, "I only buy cans labeled BPA-free!" The sad thing is that the industry has made what scientists are calling "regrettable substitutions" and have replaced the BPA with another bisphenol chemical like BPS or BPF. Already studies are showing that these chemicals are as harmful or more than BPA. Thankfully, there is an exception. Eden foods has a chemical-free, vegetable-based coating that was used in the past before the less expensive BPA option became available.

One study showed that after just 3 days of eating a fresh food diet with no products taken from a can or plastic packaging, the levels of BPA in participants' urine fell 65%! In another study, people ate 1 serving of fresh or canned soup daily for 5 days. Urine levels of BPA were 1,221% higher in those who consumed the canned soup. This is an astronomical increase. Speculation is that the soup was a tomato soup that contained oils since tomatoes, which are acidic, and oils both increase the migration of BPA into the contents of the can.

Plastic sippy cups and baby bottles are another source of plastics to toss. Even those labeled BPA-free if they are made of plastic. Again, because of the regrettable substitution chemicals like BPS and BPF. Children are exposed by touching items and then putting their hands in their mouth or by putting their mouth on the item. As mentioned, bisphenols impact a child's neurological and hormonal systems. See our resources section for plastic-free sippy cups and bottles.

Now let's talk about BPA throughout your home.

**Toilet paper** - Toilet paper is applied to the most vulnerable skin on the body for absorbing chemicals. This is not a good thing since BPA mimics the structure and function of the hormone estrogen. We have an epidemic of people that have endocrine issues including difficulty getting pregnant. Hormone disruption is not the only concern. The following examples show how harmful chemicals impact our vulnerability to infection. Numerous clients stopped having chronic urinary infections after changing to BPA-free and fragrance free toilet paper. One client had removed a lot of other toxins and her chronic yeast infections didn't stop until she finally tossed her toilet paper containing BPA.

We have a similar issue with feminine hygiene products like tampons and sanitary pads. They present an even greater hazard than toilet paper because of the longer contact time and internal insertion. Numerous clients did not have a symptom-free menstrual cycle until changing to nontoxic feminine hygiene products. Excruciating cramps were eliminated in some clients just from that one, simple change. We've also seen long-awaited pregnancies occur after tossing the toxins including BPA in feminine products and toilet paper.

One of Marilee's clients had tossed many toxins but was still having painful menstrual cramps. She used a special heavy flow tampon she wasn't willing to toss. Marilee asked her to do an experiment and not use it her next period. She hardly had any cramps. She thought it might have only been a coincidence so the next month Marilee had her to wait a day after she started before using the tampon. The first day she had no cramps, the second day she used the tampon and her cramps returned. Needless to say, she connected the dots and tossed that toxin! Please do yourself a favor and get rid of these products!

Now for other common sources.

When your child goes to the dentist - just say no to Dental Sealants. Many of them contain compounds that turn into BPA on contact with saliva. Even if they're presented to you as safe, don't be afraid to take time to do your own research and say no.

Thermal Paper that's used for receipts plus airline boarding passes and baggage claim stubs is especially high in BPA. You can rub the paper with a coin and it will turn black if it is thermal paper. Studies show the BPA readily penetrates the skin especially after using hand sanitizers. The uptake increased 100-fold. Go paperless or have the cashier place the receipt in a dedicated envelope to keep your receipts in. You can always help the cashier too by informing them and encouraging them to request BPA free paper.

Socks made of polyester and spandex have also been found to have BPA. This is concerning as the skin on the feet are primary uploads for toxins to enter the body. BPA is added in the manufacturing of polyester as an intermediary step to improve the natural properties and lifespan of a fabric. Furthermore, BPA may be used in spandex production for antistatic properties. This is another good reason to wear clothing made from all natural fibers.

Finally, dust. BPA is an SVOC that rides on dust. You can greatly reduce exposure to BPA through inhalation of dust by routine HEPA vacuuming and/or dusting using microfibers at least once a week as described in the plastics introductory video. And remember to change your return air supply filters every one to three months. We recommend Filtrete Filters. The use of a good air purifier with a HEPA filter will also reduce household dust.

Overall, removing sources of BPA can be a game-changer! You can see our resources section to further help you with the transition.

