



PRESS RELEASE

Two-thirds of food cans tested have linings containing BPA, US study shows

Brussels, 30 February 2015 – A report released today following the testing of nearly 200 food cans for the toxic chemical, Bisphenol A (BPA) found that two out of three cans have the chemical in the lining. (1)

The report, *Buyer Beware: Toxic BPA & Regrettable Substitutes in the Linings of Canned Food*, by six North American non-profit organizations (2) includes findings from tests on the linings of 192 cans of vegetables, fruit, soups, sauces, milk and beans from big brands such as Campbell's, Del Monte, General Mills, Nestle and more.

BPA is an endocrine-disrupting chemical that negatively impacts our hormonal systems. Evidence suggests it may contribute to a host of harmful health effects including breast and prostate cancer, infertility, type-2 diabetes, obesity, asthma and attention deficit disorder. More recent studies indicate that it can lead to the development of food allergies and weaken resistance to infections. Bisphenol A, when used in epoxy can linings, migrates into the food which is one of the main sources of people's exposure to this chemical.

The report's alarming findings include:

- 100 percent of Campbell's products sampled (15 cans) contained BPA-based epoxy, while the company claims they are making significant progress in a transition away from BPA.
- 71 percent of 10 Del Monte cans tested positive for BPA.
- 50 percent of 12 General Mills cans tested positive for BPA.
- Although fewer cans were tested for the large Europe-based company, Nestle, all 3 cans of Nestlé Carnation (milks and creams) tested contained BPA.

What about the alternatives?

For the first time ever, this report also identified the replacement materials for BPA in can linings, and to what extent – if any — their safety has been studied.

It found that aside from BPA, four major coating types were identified among the 192 cans tested: acrylic resins, oleoresin, polyester resins, and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) copolymers. Multiple formulations of these compounds were found but it was not possible to determine the specific chemicals used or how they are produced. The authors say that manufacturers should disclose which chemicals are used in these formulations. They recommended more research to determine the safety of these compounds and to show what toxics may be migrating from the "alternative" can linings into food.

Recommendations

The report recommends that companies and retailers eliminate (and safely substitute) BPA from all food packaging and label all chemicals used in can liners. They say consumers should choose fresh or

frozen food or look for food packaged in other materials, such as glass. The authors have also launched a video about BPA in food can linings and an online campaign. (2)

Reaction in Europe

Lisette van Vliet, Senior Policy Advisor for the Health and Environment Alliance says:

“This report shows that the food packaging industries are barely moving when it comes to eliminating BPA from food cans in the USA. Here, meanwhile, the European Commission plans to set a limit on BPA in food contact materials which the industries anticipate will mean “business as usual”. HEAL wants European and national authorities to do better in protecting our health. We call for swift action to get BPA out of food packaging and make sure the alternatives used are safer. A recent report from the Dutch public health institute also concludes that stronger measures should be taken to reduce people’s exposures (3).”

Some EU and national regulation of BPA in food packaging already exists in Europe. For example, BPA cannot be used in baby bottles in the EU. Sweden, Denmark and Belgium have banned BPA in the food contact materials (including packaging, plates, cups and cutlery) intended for children under three years old. France has banned the use of BPA in all food contact materials. (4)

An opinion published by the European Food and Safety Authority (EFSA) in January 2015 concluded that current levels of exposure to BPA from various sources, such as food contact materials, cash receipts (thermal paper), cosmetics and toys for example, would not pose a risk to health. This has provoked criticism from some national bodies and scientists, who consider the safety level set by EFSA as too high. When the European Commission asked for reactions to its proposed “road map” on BPA, HEAL took the opportunity to say that it believes that relying on EFSA’s risk assessment of BPA represented “a poor policy choice”. (5)

BPA has recently become officially classified in the European System as ‘toxic to reproduction’ (6).

Contacts

Lisette van Vliet, Senior Policy Advisor, HEAL, lisette@env-health.org Tel: +32 2 234 36 45. Mobile: +32 484 614 528

Diana Smith, HEAL Communications and Media Adviser, Diana@env-health.org, mobile: +33 6 33 04 2943

Notes for Journalists

1. Press release: <http://www.toxicfoodcans.org/press-release/#sthash.Jvnk7YJ9.dpu>
2. Report: *Buyer Beware: Toxic BPA & Regrettable Substitutes in the Linings of Canned Food* (#BPA #ToxicFoodCans) was conceived and authored by the [Breast Cancer Fund](#); [Campaign for Healthier Solutions](#); [Clean Production Action](#); [Ecology Center](#); [Environmental Defence](#) (Canada); and [Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families' Mind the Store campaign](#). The full report, video and link to campaign call are all available here <http://www.toxicfoodcans.org/>
3. Dutch public health institute (RIVM) advises Dutch government to reduce exposure to BPA, March 2016, <http://www.env-health.org/resources/press-releases/article/dutch-public-health-institute-rivm>
4. HEAL’s policy briefing, Food contact materials and chemical contamination, 15 January 2016, <http://www.env-health.org/resources/publications/article/food-contact-materials-and>
5. EFSA’s conclusions on BPA, 12 February 2015, <http://www.env-health.org/news/latest-news/article/efsa-s-conclusions-on-bpa>
6. The EU Commission member state REACH committee recently classified BPA as category 1 B, “a presumed reproductive toxicant”. This means BPA is now recognised as a substance which can adversely affect the human reproductive system.

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union (EU). With the support of more than 70 member organisations, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Our broad alliance represents health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, doctors, nurses, cancer and asthma groups, citizens, women's groups, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists and public health research institutes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations as well as national and local groups. Website: www.env-health.org. Follow HEAL on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) [@HealthandEnv](#) [@EDCFree](#) and [@CHM_HEAL](#)