

# PLASTICS

The use of plastics in cooking and food storage carry many health risks. A myriad of petroleum-based chemicals go into the manufacture of plastics. Some of these chemicals can leach into food and drinks and impact human health. Leaching increases when plastic comes in contact with oily or fatty foods, during heating and from old or scratched plastic containers.

**Bisphenol A (BPA)**, a chemical that mimics the action of the human hormone estrogen, is one such chemical that can leach from plastics into our food. Human exposure to BPA is widespread; studies have detected BPA in the urine of 95 percent of adults sampled. Scientists have also measured dangerous levels of BPA in the blood of pregnant women, in umbilical cord blood and in the placenta.

Why is bisphenol A harmful? Of 115 published animal studies, 81 percent found significant effects from even low-level exposure to BPA. While none of the 11 industry-funded studies found significant effects, over 90 percent of government-funded studies did so.

## **ADVERSE EFFECTS INCLUDE:**

- Increased risk of prostate, ovarian and breast cancer
- Early onset of puberty
- Changes in gender-specific behavior
- Changes in hormones, including decreased testosterone in men
- Increased prostate size and decreased sperm production
- Altered immune function

## **TIPS FOR SAFER, MORE SUSTAINABLE FOOD USE OF PLASTICS**

1. **Avoid using plastic containers in the microwave.**
2. **Beware of cling wraps especially for microwave use.** When heated, the chemicals in plastic wrap melt into your food, so instead use waxed paper or paper towel for covering foods in the microwave.
3. **Use alternatives to plastic food packaging whenever possible.**
4. **Avoid plastic bottled water.**

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