

BPA (Bisphenol-A)...what you need to know!

I saw a post recently about a deal on [Sistema](#) storage containers & it prompted me to take a bit of action in my own tupperware drawer. Long story short, on my mission to make my whole world more environmentally friendly, healthier, & chemical free, I spent a nice little chunk of change & got some Sistema BPA & Phthalate free containers. Next time I'm going for glass, read on to learn why...

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First, what is BPA (bisphenol A)? It's been an industrially used chemical around since the 50's, though discovered in 1891, & is used to make certain [plastics](#) & resins. We see them mostly in our water & beverage bottles, canned foods, packaged foods, take-away & storage containers.

The link on the word plastic is a great read if you are interested in a brief history of plastics, BPA in particular

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BPA is an endocrine disruptor, which means it can imitate the body's hormones, interfering with the production, secretion, transport, action or function, & even the elimination of those hormones. It may also interact with thyroid hormone receptors, again altering their function.

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The main source of exposure is through diet as not all particles are sealed into the various containers & many break free entering our bodies. BPA can leach out of any container it's used in & can be seen almost immediately in urine samples, as noted in multiple studies ([1](#), [2](#)). One study in particular compared eating fresh soup vs canned soup for 5 days & those eating canned soups had an increased urine content of BPA 1,221% higher than those eating fresh soups ([3](#)).

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In truth BPA is in everything from toiletries, to feminine hygiene products, sport equipment, to dental filling sealants & more. So taking steps to reduce it where you can might be worthwhile if you are wanting to limit your exposure to this type of toxin & its negative effects as discussed further down the page.

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What are the effects of BPA on the body? Sadly many, too many for this post but the ones that are getting the most research are the effects of BPA on:

- Endocrine (hormone) disruption ([4](#)) including reduced fertility & miscarriages ([10](#), [11](#))
- Cardiovascular diseases like hypertension at an increased risk of 27-135% ([6](#), [12](#)) & Type 2 Diabetes
- Fetal development ([13](#))
- Endocrine cancers like ovary, breast & prostate ([5](#)).

It's worth mentioning that research in these areas is ongoing & always being updated. BPA is also being investigated in relation to links with:

- Obesity, PCOS, Premature births
- Liver, Immunity, Thyroid & even Brain functions.

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There are many examples & studies I could cite regarding the above risks BPA poses to our health but we'll focus primarily on the endocrine disruption of estrogen, as it is far reaching. In short, BPA has a similar shape to estrogen allowing it to bind & mimic this hormone, influencing processes like:

- Cell repair
- Hair growth
- Fetal development
- Reproduction
- Energy.
- Cardiovascular disease as estrogen's role is believed to have a positive effect on the inner layer of the artery walls, helping to keep blood vessels relaxed, allowing for expansion & contraction when regulating blood flow ([7](#)).

Estrogen is part of a category of sex hormones responsible for the development & regulation of the female reproductive system & secondary sex characteristics. It also contributes to cognitive health, bone health, & cardiovascular function as mentioned above. Notably, it is also present in males but in lower amounts & in the form of estradiol, which also plays a role in male sexuality. However, testosterone is the prominent male hormone.

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Maybe next time you say “my hormones are out of balance”, stop to think about why this might be. Our bodies don’t naturally go out of balance, with the exception of some medical conditions. This is because we have a highly intuitive & complex homeostatic system that works tirelessly to keep us “balanced”. Our hormones primarily go out of balance because of all the outside influences we are constantly bombarded with.

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So you can see why we wouldn’t want to rock the estrogen boat & while we aren’t going to avoid *all* BPA, I would strongly recommend working to limit your exposure where you can. The most available choices being:

- Reusable water bottles or stainless steel to go mugs or water bottles (I love [Klean Kanteen](#))
- Glass tupperware
- Don’t heat your food in containers
- Make your food from scratch as often as possible
- Reduce your plastic consumption (bananas DO NOT need to go in bag on their way to the check out)
- Buy local where possible, the distance your food travels impacts quality on many levels
- Reduce take-aways, again lots of benefits here not just hot food in poorly made plastic
- Organic pads & tampons, they are not more expensive & I cannot stress this one enough, or try a [cup](#)!!
- Increase your intake of fruits & vegetables for the vitamins, minerals, & antioxidants our bodies need
- Get fresh air daily, minimum 30 min & if you can be away from pollution even better

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In summary, while the FDA assures consumers BPA is safe in low doses, if you want to be more mindful check for recycling symbols 3, 7 or PC on containers of all sorts, as in most cases this indicates the presence of BPA. Likewise if it doesn't say BPA free, you can assume it contains it. Lastly, it is worth noting that while containers may be BPA free, they have merely used a less toxic version of this compound called bisphenol-S (BPS) or in some cases bisphenol-F (BSF) which are still endocrine disrupting ([8](#), [9](#)). I know & I’m sorry, it’s like the movie you want to end well but shocks & angers you instead.

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So while the ultimate goal is glass storage containers, stainless steel bottles, & no packaged foods (long term goals), I too am starting with what I can afford & what is practical for my life right now. Could you imagine hiking loaded down with glassware for the day's meal & snacks...might be good if you want extra strength training but I’m not there yet.

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Making some changes though can be an improvement on the reduction of chemicals, & small changes are better than none! There are also many ways to help regulate your hormones through dietary interventions, so fear not...health doesn’t have to be so hard, even if the world keeps throwing obstacles at us.

To learn more, please get in contact.



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