



## International Bottled Water Association Position Statement Polycarbonate Plastic Containers Used For Bottled Water Products are Safe for Consumer Use

Recent media stories have raised questions about the safety of polycarbonate plastic bottles due to the presence of a substance known as bisphenol A (SPA). Polycarbonate plastic is used in a wide variety of consumer products, including food and drink containers. Many 3 and 5-gallon bottled water containers are made of polycarbonate plastic and consumers can remain confident about the safety of these products.

- Bottled water is comprehensively regulated as a food product by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Plastic food and beverage containers, including polycarbonate plastic made with SPA, must meet or exceed all FDA requirements. FDA clears all food-contact plastics for their intended use based on migration and safety data. The clearance process includes stringent requirements for estimating the levels at which such materials may transfer to the diet. FDA's safety criteria require extensive toxicity testing for any substance that may be ingested at more than negligible levels. This means FDA has affirmatively determined that, when cleared plastics are used as intended in food-contact applications, the nature and amount of substances that may migrate, if any, are safe.
- Polycarbonate plastic has been the material of choice for food and beverage product containers for nearly 50 years because it is lightweight, highly shatter-resistant, and transparent. During that time, many International studies have been conducted to assess the potential for trace levels of SPA to migrate from lined cans or polycarbonate bottles into foods or beverages. The conclusions from those studies and comprehensive safety evaluations by government bodies worldwide are that polycarbonate bottles are safe for consumer use.
- In March, 2009, Health Canada (the federal government agency that regulates food in Canada) published a survey of SPA levels found in canned drinks that used an epoxy resin liner (which contains SPA) to protect the contents from direct contact with the metal. Based on the highest SPA level found in the products that were surveyed, an adult would have to consume 940 canned drinks in one day to approach the conservatively safe provisional tolerable daily intake (TDI) level for SPA established by Health Canada. And since SPA from polycarbonate sources is identical to SPA found in epoxy resin liners, the same high degree of safety would apply to bottled water containers made of polycarbonate plastic. The survey results caused Health Canada to conclude that "the current dietary exposure to SPA through food packaging uses is not expected to pose a health risk to the general population."
- Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) asserted in March, 2009, that it has assessed the risk to infants from exposure to SPA and concurred with the conclusions reached by the US FDA and the EFSA that the levels of exposure are very low and do not pose a significant health risk.
- On February 9, 2009, FDA stated: "With regard to SPA generally, based on all available evidence, the consensus of regulatory agencies in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan is that the current levels of exposure to SPA through food packaging do not pose an immediate health risk to the general population, including infants and young children."
- In that same February 9, 2009 statement, FDA said that it "is currently preparing a detailed response to the October 2008 review by the FDA Science Board of the agency's draft assessment of the safety of SPA for use in food contact applications." The draft assessment focused on the concerns for developmental toxicity identified in recent assessments of SPA, including those of the National Toxicology Program and their expert panel. For example, the FDA is reviewing research about the potential low-dose effects of SPA and will carefully evaluate the findings of these studies.
- The National Toxicology Program released its final report on the potential human reproductive and developmental effects of bisphenol A on September 3, 2008. From a wide variety of possible adverse health effects that were considered, the NTP has only *some concern* for effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and children at current human exposures to bisphenol A. This means that NTP believes that more research is needed in this area, which ISWA supports. A publication by Yale University claims to have linked SPA to problems with brain function and mood disorders in monkeys. The American Chemistry Council responded to the Yale study in a statement, saying "there is no direct evidence that exposure to bisphenol A adversely affects human

- reproduction or development." Further, on September 17, 2008, Lang et al. published in the Journal of the American Medical Association an epidemiological study linking an increased presence of bisphenol A in the blood of humans to an increase in diabetes and certain cardiovascular diseases. While epidemiological research can provide insights into the occurrence of diseases, it can never establish a causal relationship. Therefore, this study does not demonstrate that bisphenol A was the cause of any of the reported effects.
- Germany's Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (SFR, the German equivalent to the FDA) evaluated the relevance of both the Yale and JAMA studies and concluded that the results published in these reports do not question the current risk assessment of bisphenol A in food. Moreover, The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) released a statement on October 22, 2008 concerning the JAMA study that concluded that there is no sufficient proof for a causal link between exposure to SPA and the health conditions mentioned in the article.

For more information on this issue, visit the FDA's website at <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bpa.html> or the American Chemistry Council's website at [www.factsnplastic.com](http://www.factsnplastic.com) or [www.bisphenol-a.org](http://www.bisphenol-a.org)

*The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) is the authoritative source of information about all types of bottled waters. Founded in 1958, IBWA's membership includes U. S. and international bottlers, distributors and suppliers. IBWA is committed to working with the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which regulates bottled water as a packaged food product, and state governments to set stringent standards for safe, high quality bottled water products. In addition to FDA and state regulations, the Association requires member bottlers to adhere to the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice, which mandates additional standards and practices that in some cases are more stringent than federal and state regulations. A key feature of the IBWA Bottled Water Code of Practice is an annual, unannounced plant inspection by an independent, third party organization.*

*Consumers can contact IBWA at 1-800-WATER-11 or log onto IBWA's web site ([www.bottledwater.org](http://www.bottledwater.org)) for more information about bottled water and a list of members' brands. Media inquiries can be directed to Tom Lauria at 703-647-4609 or [tlauria@bottledwater.org](mailto:tlauria@bottledwater.org).*

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