

The Plastic Threat to Human Health

The billions upon billions of items of plastic waste choking our oceans, lakes, and rivers and piling up on land are more than unsightly and harmful to plants and wildlife. The following 8 facts shed light on how plastic is proving dangerous to our planet, health, and wildlife. To learn more about the threat and impact of plastic pollution and get tips to reduce your plastic consumption, download our Plastic Pollution Primer and Toolkit and use our Plastic Pollution Calculator today!

Bisphenol A also known as BPA, used to make billions of plastic beverage containers, dinnerware, protective linings of food cans & toys, is considered an endocrine disruptor, meaning it can both decrease or increase endocrine activity in humans and cause adverse health effects.

Source: CDC & National Institute of Health



BPA is able to be absorbed by fat tissue, and is associated with increased risk of breast cancer. Additionally, the breast milk of most women in the developed world contains dozens of compounds including BPA that have been linked to negative health effects.

Source: National Institute of Health & Scientific American

Some animal studies have indicated adverse effects of BPA on newborns & fetuses.

Source: National Institute of Health



Importantly, the label BPA-free in a container of a bottle doesn't mean a product is free from other harmful chemical compounds that are slightly different but have a different name.

Source: Time.com

Growing literature links many Phthalates, which are a group of chemicals used to make plastics more flexible and harder to break, with a variety of adverse outcomes including weight gain and insulin resistance, decreased levels of sex hormones, and other consequences for the human reproductive system both for females and males.

Source: CDC & National Institute of Health



When food is wrapped in plastic containing BPA, phthalates may leak into the food. Any migration is likely to be greater when in contact with fatty foods such as meats and cheeses than with other foods.

Source: Harvard.edu

In general, it is not recommended to heat food in plastic containers with the codes 3 and 7. The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service advises Americans not to reuse margarine tubs, take-out containers, whipped topping bowls, and other one-time use containers, which are more likely to melt & cause chemicals to leach into food.

Source: USDA.com

