

Q&As for Bisphenol A in Feeding Bottles

What is bisphenol A (BPA)?

Bisphenol A (or BPA as it often called) is a chemical used in the production of polycarbonate and epoxy resins

Where is bisphenol A found?

BPA may be found in polycarbonate feeding bottles as well as other common household items made from polycarbonate.

Epoxy resins are often used to line metal based food and drink cans.

Why is bisphenol A of concern?

Some studies suggest that exposure to bisphenol A may pose health hazards to the development of the reproductive system. Other studies show there is no cause for concern. In short there is no clear position and most reports show that the exposure levels are below any levels which may be harmful.

Why is bisphenol A being covered in the news?

A recent study by the Canadian government has led to a review in Canada proposing to restrict the levels of bisphenol A in food containers and potentially ban polycarbonate feeding bottles.

Why has Canada decided to do this?

It appears that Canada and the USA do NOT currently restrict the levels of BPA allowed in feeding equipment. We understand the US is currently not taken any action restricting bisphenol A or polycarbonate bottles.

What is the UK/Europe doing on Bisphenol A?

In Europe regulations have been in place since 2004 which already enforce VERY tight restriction on the levels of Bisphenol A allowed in feeding and drinking equipment, especially for those products for children under the age of 3. These restricted levels are set below any levels which may cause concern.

ALL bottles, beakers and drinking cups sold by Mothercare comply with the European requirements.

Even with these restrictions in Europe, is the level of bisphenol A still a concern?

The levels set are very strict and are well below any levels likely to cause harm. The Food Standards Agency advises that the amount of chemicals in products such as baby bottles are well below levels considered harmful and the bottles are completely safe to use.

How are babies exposed to bisphenol A from feeding bottles or drinking cups?

Bisphenol A – if it is present - may leak into the liquid (milk, water, etc) from the polycarbonate bottle, in certain conditions:

- If the bottle is damaged or scratched internally
- If the bottle is filled with boiling water

- If the bottle is filled immediately after steam sterilisation

All Mothercare bottles comply with the European standards which restrict the levels of BPA.

What are Mothercare doing in relation to BPA in feeding bottles?

Mothercare offers a wide range of feeding options to ensure customers have the choice of product to suit them.

As well as polycarbonate bottles we carry a selected range of feeding bottles made from polypropylene – which do not contain bisphenol A

We are also actively investigating other options including glass bottles (which do not contain bisphenol A) to increase the width of choice for our customers.

We continue to offer the polycarbonate bottles and have consulted with toxicological and chemical experts at an independent test laboratory who advise that the restricted levels set by the European requirements are below any levels which would cause concern. The bottles and drinking cups sold by Mothercare comply with the European requirements.

How can I tell if my bottles contain bisphenol A?

Bisphenol A is only found in polycarbonate bottles.

The only way to be sure whether a bottle is made from polycarbonate is if it carries the recycle triangle containing a number 7 and the PC letters under the recycle symbol (shown as OTHER on the image below)



If the symbols contains a number but does not have the PC letters underneath, you cannot be sure it is made from polycarbonate.

Bottles made from polypropylene are marked with a number 5 and may also be marked with PP under the symbol. These bottles do NOT contain bisphenol A as it is not used in the manufacture of polypropylene.



NOTE: Please note that not all bottles or plastic products are marked with these recycling symbols.

Can I tell by looking at the bottle or squeezing the bottle?

The only way to be sure whether a bottle is made from polycarbonate is if it carries the recycle triangle containing a number 7 and the PC letters under the recycle symbol.

The new reports on the BBC mentioned that it is possible to tell by squeezing the bottle. This is not a sure way to tell as the design of bottles – even those made from polycarbonate – may allow some flexibility or “give” in the bottle.

What are the alternatives to polycarbonate bottles? What bottles are free from bisphenol A?

Bottles made from other plastics such as polypropylene and glass do not contain bisphenol A.

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We are also actively investigating other options including glass bottles to increase the width of choice for our customers.

Do I need to stop using my polycarbonate bottles?

No – polycarbonate bottles can be safely used.

Advice from many different sources - including the NCT, independent chemical and toxicological experts, and Food Standards Agency – all state that it is safe to continue to use polycarbonate feeding bottles.

How can I ensure my polycarbonate feeding bottles are safe to use?

Mothercare suggest that you follow the advice below when using feeding bottles – of any type:

- 1) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and sterilisation of the bottles. Allow bottles to cool before removing from the steriliser.
- 2) Always check bottles for damage prior to each use.
 - a. Bottles must be discarded when they become grazed, scratched internally or show any other signs of wear.
 - b. Bottles should not be used for more than 6 months, particularly if they are heavily used
- 3) Do NOT fill bottles with boiling water. Water should be boiled then allowed to cool slightly for no longer than 30 minutes before being added to the bottles.
- 4) Do not heat in the microwave as the liquid may heat unevenly, causing hot spots and burns to the child.

What should I do if I have been using boiling water up to now in bottles?

It is very unlikely that you will have caused any harm to your child. All bottles supplied by Mothercare comply with European requirements restricting the limits of bisphenol A.

If you have used boiling water directly in your bottles, Mothercare suggest that you follow the advice below:

- 1) Examine the bottles carefully for signs of scratching and damage – especially on the inside of the bottle.
 - a. Bottles must be discarded when they become grazed, scratched internally or show any other signs of wear.
 - b. Bottles should not be used for more than 6 months, particularly if they are heavily used
- 2) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and sterilisation of the bottles. Allow bottles to cool before removing from the steriliser.
- 3) Always check bottles for damage prior to each use.
- 4) Do NOT fill bottles with boiling water. Water should be boiled then allowed to cool for no longer than 30 minutes before being added to the bottles.
- 5) Do not heat in the microwave as the liquid may heat unevenly, causing hot spots and burns to the child.

Do I need to be worried about sterilising bottles or other drinking equipment?

It is very important that feeding equipment for use for children under 12 months of age is cleaned and sterilised before use.

All bottles – including polycarbonate bottles – can be sterilized according to the instruction provided with the bottle/steriliser. Some additional guidelines below

Steam sterilisation:

Bottles should be left to cool in the steriliser before adding water and making up feeds. The feed does NOT come into contact with the bottle in the steriliser.

Microwave sterilisation:

This is a different form of steam sterilisation. Bottles should be left to cool in the steriliser before adding water and making up feeds. The feed does NOT come into contact with the bottle in the steriliser.

Cold water sterilisation solutions:

Cold water sterilisation using appropriate sterilising fluid/tablets is an alternative to steam sterilisation.

Can Bisphenol A leak from other products (Drink bottles, tableware etc)?

All studies so far – including the study in Canada - show that bisphenol A is less likely to leak at room temperature. We recommend that you do not place boiling hot food on plates or in dishes. Always check the temperature of the food before giving to your child.

Are teats and soother free from bisphenol A?

Yes - teats and soothers are generally made from silicon or latex which does not contain bisphenol A.

Guidelines for making up feeds:

Mothercare recommends that all feeds are made up following the guidelines below:

- Feeds should be made up 1 at a time as needed.
- Do NOT pour boiling water directly into the bottle.
- Water used to make up feeds should be at least 70 degrees C.
 - In practical terms, this means boiling fresh tap water (not bottled or artificially softened) and leaving no longer than 30 minutes after it has boiled.
 - By doing this, the temperature of the water will be hot enough to make the feed.
- Once the feed has been made up, it should be cooled under a running cold tap – with the cap covering the teat.
- Remember to test the temperature of the feed before giving it to the baby to ensure it is not too hot.
- Milk made from powder should never be reheated nor left over milk re-used - instead, it should be thrown away.
- Please note: cartons of Ready-to-Feed formula are sterile.