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Bisphenol A May Affect Brain, Behavior, Prostate in Children

WASHINGTON, DC, September 3, 2008 (ENS) - Two federal government agencies are at odds over the safety of bisphenol A, a chemical used to harden plastic products such as baby bottles and drinking water bottles and for lining food and beverage cans.

A report today by the National Institutes of Health's National Toxicology Program finding that bisphenol A may alter brain development and behavior and increase the risk of prostate cancer in children, infants and fetuses is in direct contradiction to last month's assessment by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that the chemical is safe at current levels of exposure.

Based on 261 scientific publications, the National Toxicology Program report contradicts an FDA draft report released in August which found that bisphenol A is safe at current human exposure levels and does not recommend banning the chemical.

Some 93 percent of Americans have detectable levels of bisphenol A in their urine, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on urine samples provided by 2,500 Americans aged six and older for a national health survey in 2003-2004.



Toxicology Shatterproof baby bottles are often hardened with bisphenol A. (Photo by Wendy

based on the assessment of an expert panel convened by the Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human

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Reproduction that evaluated the potential for bisphenol A to cause adverse effects on reproduction and development in humans.

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The panel completed its evaluation in August 2007 and the NTP assessment also includes scientific information that has been reported since then.

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CERHR Director Dr. Michael Shelby states in the report that bisphenol A was selected for evaluation because of widespread human exposure, public concern for possible health effects from human exposures, high production volume, and evidence of reproductive and developmental toxicity in laboratory animal studies.

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After assessing the evidence, the National Toxicology Program said it has "some concern for effects on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and children at current human exposures to bisphenol A."

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The NTP has "minimal concern for effects on the mammary gland and an earlier age for puberty for females in fetuses, infants, and children at current human exposures to bisphenol A."

The NTP has "negligible concern that exposure of pregnant women to bisphenol A will result in fetal or neonatal mortality, birth defects, or reduced birth weight and growth in their offspring."

The NTP has "negligible concern that exposure to bisphenol A will cause reproductive effects in non-occupationally exposed adults and minimal concern for workers exposed to higher levels in occupational settings."

The National Toxicology Program review reflects the findings of dozens of independent scientists from around the world who have raised questions about the chemical's possible dangers for more than a decade.

Richard Wiles, executive director of the nonprofit research organization Environmental Working Group, said today in a statement,

"Unlike the FDA, NTP has listened to the nation's premier scientists and has concluded that the BPA threat to the brains, bodies and behavior of our children must be taken seriously."

"The agency's stance is measured and courageous in the face of the slick, relentless publicity campaign from the chemical industry, which seems to be following the tobacco industry's playbook," said Wiles.



These plastic bottles do not contain bisphenol A. (Photo by [Alicia Voorhees](#))

He points out that the NTP reviewed several hundred independent scientific studies before reaching its conclusion, while the FDA relied on three chemical-

industry funded reports, which gave the toxic chemical the thumbs up for use in consumer products.

"Consumers deserve straight talk from the government," said Wiles. "The new NTP assessment tells us that we are right to be concerned about BPA and the industry's ongoing chemistry experiment on our kids."

The American Chemistry Council, an industry trade group, today said it welcomes the release of the final report on bisphenol A from the National Toxicology Program, saying that the findings of the report identified no serious human health concerns.

"The safety of our products is our highest priority," said Steven Hentges, PhD, of the American Chemistry Council's Polycarbonate/BPA Global Group. "An earlier draft of the NTP report has already been used by the Food and Drug Administration to support their safety assessment, which confirms that food-contact products made from polycarbonate plastic, including products for infants and children, can continue to be used safely."

The FDA draft report, released August 15, states that based on lab tests in rodents, infants and adults are exposed to bisphenol A levels that are below toxic levels.

"Safe or safety means that there is reasonable certainty in the minds of competent scientists that the substance is not harmful under the intended conditions of use," but "complete certainty of absolute harmlessness is scientifically impossible to establish," the draft report states.

But Wiles said the FDA report "ignored the nation's top public health scientists, and instead lauded the benefits of a toxic, hormone disruptor found in virtually every infant in America."

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