



Come Grow with Us



Partners with the Community
for Healthy Children

Reducing the risk of BPA exposure

Recent scientific and media reports have drawn attention to the potential risks posed by bisphenol A (BPA), an additive in polycarbonate plastics and the epoxy linings of canned goods. BPA is used widely in the manufacturing of infant feeding bottles/devices and the packaging of infant formula. Animal research has linked very low doses of BPA to several health concerns. Newborn infants and children may be particularly sensitive to the effects of BPA.



According to Health Canada (2008), BPA can:

- Leach into hot and boiling water that is placed in polycarbonate baby bottles or feeding devices. If this water is ingested, or is used to make formula, the infant or child is then exposed
- Migrate into infant formula from formula cans that are lined with BPA-containing epoxy resins

Health Canada announced in October 2008 that it will immediately begin to draft regulations to ban the importation, sale and advertising of polycarbonate baby bottles that contain bisphenol A (BPA).

How can caregivers reduce exposure to BPA?

If child care providers offer expressed breastmilk, formula or other liquids via bottles or alternative feeding devices, there are ways to reduce exposure to BPA, including the following:

- Select baby bottles/cups that are made from non-polycarbonate plastic. If parents supply bottles/cups for their child, encourage them to purchase baby bottles/cups made from non-polycarbonate plastic or consider bottles with disposable liners
- Do not put boiling water into baby bottles/feeding devices with the intent to use this water in the preparation of formula or for drinking water
- Do not heat baby bottles/cups in the microwave. Not only does this cause BPA to leach from a polycarbonate bottle, it may cause 'hot spots' in the fluid and is dangerous for all babies. To warm a bottle, place it in a container of warm water
- For infants under 4 months of age, water for formula preparation should be boiled and allowed to cool to lukewarm in a non-BPA container before transferring to baby bottles
- For infants under 4 months of age, all bottles can be sanitized according to instruction from local Public Health Units. They should be left to cool to room temperature before adding liquid for infant ingestion
- Encourage parents with questions about safe formula preparation to contact York Region Community and Health Services *Health Connection*. Booklets entitled *Feeding Your Baby Infant Formula* are available to families
- Expressed breastmilk stored in the fridge can be gently warmed in a bowl of warm, not hot, water. Frozen breast milk can be thawed in the fridge then warmed in the same manner. It is best not to store expressed breastmilk in polycarbonate plastic containers. Glass, ready-sterilized storage bags or non-BPA plastic bottles and jars are options





Preparing for emergencies

Emergencies can happen at any time and any place. When they do occur, they are often unpredictable in nature and scope, so it is important that child care centres are prepared. Institutions should have emergency plans for fire and other accidents happening in their buildings. In addition, these institutions are not immune to disaster occurring outside their buildings, such as natural disasters or chemical emergencies. Since these places have a high concentration of persons, especially young people, they are very vulnerable.



To help with preparation, consider the following suggestions:

- **Be aware of the types of emergencies that may impact your area.** Sit down with caregivers and talk about what to do in different emergency situations such as fire, flood, severe weather, power outage or infectious disease outbreak. Write down the emergency plans and put them in your emergency kit. Review the plans on a regular basis. Ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the plans and where you would relocate the children should the need to evacuate arise. Establish a common meeting place should a quick exit be required, such as “the maple tree two doors down.”
- **Practice your emergency plans (e.g. a fire drill).** Practicing makes it more likely the children and yourself will remember what to do if you are faced with a real emergency. During practice runs you can easily identify issues with the plan and correct them before a real emergency occurs.
- **Have the children sit down together to create a ready-to-go emergency kit.** Get the older children to actively participate in the discussion of what items should be included in your ready-to-go kit so that they are aware of the contents and what they are used for in the event of an evacuation. Do this within the context of already established emergency preparedness drills such as your fire drills. Customize your kit to suit the needs of those staff and children who may use it. Basic items to remember include: non-perishable snacks, water, a flashlight and batteries (or wind-up flashlight), a first aid kit, an extra set of keys, blankets, hand sanitizer, a whistle and toiletry items.
- **Personalize your emergency kit to suit the needs of the child care centre.** If anyone takes medications, make sure you have a list that includes the name, dose and frequency as well as a small supply. Photocopy important documents (e.g. class list, health cards, etc.), and create a list of contact numbers you may need during an emergency. Be sure to keep the list current. Ensure items like formula, diapers and toys are included for the children. Place the kit in an easily accessible location and make certain that staff knows the location.



Remember, don't be caught off-guard!

Plan ahead to ensure that the child care centre is well prepared.

For more information, please call
Health Connection at

1-800-361-5653