



US BPA usage could be curbed

BY [REBECCA TRAGER](#) | 11 MARCH 2009

Chemical industry group fights back

Major US chemical trade group the American Chemistry Council (ACC) is on the defensive following several significant moves to restrict usage of the controversial chemical bisphenol A (BPA) in food and drink containers.

On 5 March it was announced that six major baby bottle manufacturers in the US had decided to stop using BPA in the bottles they produce. In response, the ACC immediately pointed to a safety assessment completed last year by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which concluded that 'an adequate margin of safety exists for BPA at current levels of exposure from food contact uses, for infants and adults'. The group further highlighted that authorities in Europe and Japan recently reached similar conclusions.

Although an FDA August 2008 draft assessment concluded that there was inadequate evidence to connect low levels of BPA in food and beverage containers to health problems, a subcommittee of the agency's Science Board later found that the FDA used weak evidence to reach its conclusion and disregarded key data. A separate review by the US National Institutes of Health's National Toxicology Program last year found that BPA could interfere with foetal and newborn brain development.

Chemistry industry commitments

'ACC and its member companies that manufacture and use BPA are committed to providing products that protect public health and safety, especially when it comes to our children,' said Steve Hentges, executive director of the group's Polycarbonate/BPA Global Group. 'We have and will continue to develop scientific data to inform credible, transparent scientific assessments of BPA so that the public can have the confidence it deserves in the safety of these products.'

Avent, Disney First Years, Gerber, Dr. Brown, Playtex and Evenflow will all discontinue the use of BPA in their baby bottle products. Their decision came following a request by the Connecticut, New Jersey and Delaware Attorneys General back in October.

Connecticut's Attorney General, Richard Blumenthal, suggested in a 5 March statement that the continued threat of BPA in other products, particularly those used by infants and children, warranted immediate legislative action.

'This prompt positive response sends a profoundly significant message that baby bottle manufacturers respect the science showing BPA health dangers -and will do the right thing,' Blumenthal stated. 'Hopefully other industries will heed our plea, and a broader legislative ban will be approved this session.'

In a 7 March letter to Connecticut's *Hartford Courant* newspaper, ACC's Hentges cites data from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showing that typical human exposure to BPA from all sources is approximately 1,000 times lower than the safe intake level recently set by the European Food Safety Authority based on its review of the science.

Beyond Connecticut

But the anti-BPA activity in the US is not restricted to Connecticut. Lawmakers in one New York county have voted to ban the sale of infant and toddler drinking items that contain BPA. The measure, which was passed on 3 March unanimously by the Suffolk County Legislature, would prohibit the use of BPA in baby bottles and 'sippy' cups sold for use by children under the age of four. The county executive must sign the measure before it becomes law, but the legislature believes it could override any veto.

The Washington and California state legislatures are also considering similar measures. Meanwhile, Canada has already declared BPA a toxin and began drafting regulations last year to prohibit the importation, sale and advertising of baby bottles that contain the chemical.

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