



Plastic

Everyday, we eat, drink, breathe, and touch chemicals that exist around us. The chemicals can affect our health. Planned Parenthood **GREEN CHOICES** will give you the information you need to make choices for better health and a greener environment — for yourself, your family, and your community.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PLASTICS?

- Not all plastics are the same. They are made with different chemicals. Some are harmful to your health.
- Different kinds of plastic are labeled with different numbers. The numbers are usually in a triangle on the bottom of the product. You can use the numbers as a guide for the effect the chemicals in the plastic may have on your health. Some are better. Some are fair. Some are worse. See the chart below.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BISPHENOL A?

- **Bisphenol A (BPA)** is used to make some of the worst plastics for your health. It is often used to make containers that are hard and clear. It is found in most plastics labeled “7.”
- Some sports water bottles, baby bottles, canned foods, five-gallon water-cooler bottles, and “sippy cups” have **BPA**.
- **BPA** can seep out of plastic containers into your body very easily. Most of us already have some **BPA** in our bodies. **BPA** can disrupt your hormones.
- Companies now make containers without **BPA**. Look for “**BPA-Free**” on the label.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT POLYVINYL CHLORIDE?

- **Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)** is very harmful to your health. It is used to make all kinds of plastics. Some of the common ones are known as vinyl. **Vinyl** also has other very harmful chemicals in it, including **mercury** and **phthalates**. Some people call vinyl “the poison plastic” because it is so dangerous.
- **PVC** can disrupt your hormones. Phthalates may cause birth defects in baby boys, sperm damage, and asthma. And mercury may cause brain damage and slow down mental development. Try not to buy **PVC** plastics. They are labeled “3.”
- Buy toys, sex toys, and other plastic products with “**PVC-Free**” on the label.
- Find out more about **PVC**. [<http://www.pvcfree.org/>]



WHAT CAN I DO TO USE PLASTIC LESS OFTEN?

- Keep what you drink and eat in glass, ceramic, or metal food containers, or use plastics with the numbers 1, 2, 4, or 5.
- Try not to microwave your food or drinks in plastic containers or with plastic wrap. Instead, use glass or ceramic, and cover with a paper towel.
- Try not to buy food or other items in containers made of **polystyrene foam** (such as Styrofoam). They are labeled “6.”
- Some plastics aren’t labeled. If they aren’t, consider not using them.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONTAINERS I USE?

Get facts about safer plastics at

- www.ehhi.org/reports/plastics/ehhi_plastics_report_2008.pdf
- www.healthobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=102202