HIDDEN HAZARDS

BPA and Phthalates in Everyday Products

Plastics are embedded in our daily lives - and the chemicals they contain can leach out of everyday items and into our bodies. As highlighted in *Four Corners*, a troubling trend is emerging: cancer rates in young adults are on the rise.

Over recent decades, studies have shown a global increase in early-onset cancers. This means those diagnosed in people under 50.

We know we are exposed to a broad universe of synthetic chemicals, and they are linked to higher cancer rates and other health harms.

Four Corners looked at two chemicals – PCBs and PFAS, which are linked to cancers such as kidney, testicular and breast. These chemicals are currently regulated, although they remain in the environment and we are still exposed.

But there are thousands of other plastic chemicals that are not regulated, and some of these make us more susceptible to cancer.

This guide outlines what we know about two of the most concerning, BPA and phthalates, where they might be found, and how you and your family can reduce your exposure.

To protect ourselves, our children, and future generations, we can't just regulate in Australia. Plastic is the ultimate traveler, crossing borders and leaching chemicals as it moves. We need global rules and we can agree to this under the **Global Plastics Treaty.**

This is a good start, but it's not the entire solution because trying to regulate thousands of chemicals one by one is an exhausting game of whack-a-mole. We need to change plastic for good. And we do that by innovating safe and sustainable materials, free of toxic additives, to replace and improve plastics.



LEARN MORE

THE FACTS ABOUT BPA AND PHTHALATES

Bisphenol A or BPA is used to make polycarbonate plastic and is an additive in many different types of plastic.

Phthalates are plasticisers, which means they make plastic flexible and bendy.

Due to a lack of transparency, it's often impossible to know exactly which products contain them - but we've included common examples in this fact sheet, with some tips on alternatives.

Look after your little ones

- Teething items made from organic cotton, natural rubber, untreated wood
- Toys made from organic cotton, natural rubber and untreated wood
- Baby food from jars rather than cans – avoid the squeezy pouches!

Stay safe in the kitchen

- Stainless steel lunch boxes
- Glass and metal food storage containers
- Metal or wooden kitchen utensils
- Stainless steel cookware rather than 'non-stick' coatings

Protect your posse

- Dress in wool, silk and cotton fabrics (no polyester) ***Hint*** community marketplaces or second-hand stores for good quality hand-me-downs
- Clothing without plastic prints/motifs that can flake off
- Cosmetics and personal care products labelled 'phthalate free'
- e-receipts rather than shiny printouts from checkouts

High BPA and Phthalates levels increase risk of health problems across every stage of life:

