

WellNews: Nasty formula

by Scott_LaFee

In recent months, concern has risen over the use of polycarbonate plastic bottles that contain Bisphenol A or BPA, a man-made chemical classified as an endocrine disruptor.

NASTY FORMULA - Plastic with BPA, a man-made chemical of concern, is commonly used in products like reusable water containers such as baby bottles, food can linings, water pipes and dental sealants. CNS Photo. MEDTRONICA - The Family Practice Notebook Web site at fpnotebook.com contains roughly 5,000 topics divided into 31 'books' with titles like Dentistry, Mental Health and Orthopedics. CNS Photo.

Endocrine disruptors mimic natural hormones and are suspected of causing health problems. Plastic with BPA is commonly used in products like reusable water containers such as baby bottles, food can linings, water pipes and dental sealants. A new University of Cincinnati study indicates that the age of a plastic container has less bearing on how much BPA is released than the temperature of the liquid it's exposed to. Bottles washed in boiling water released BPA 55 times more rapidly than before exposure to hot water.

Researchers say materials made of polycarbonate plastic can release BPA for years. "Bottles used for up to nine years released the same amount of BPA as new bottles," said Scott Belcher, an associate professor of pharmacology.

Though BPA has been shown to cause harm in animal studies, it's still unknown what the exact effect is in humans.

"BPA is just one of the many estrogenlike chemicals people are exposed to," Belcher said, "and scientists are still trying to figure out how these endocrine disruptors - including natural phyto-estrogens from soy, which are often considered healthy - collectively impact human health.

"But a growing body of scientific evidence suggests it might be at the cost of your health."

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The average person will take in 5 pints of water a day. Three pints come from drinking, the other 2 pints from food.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

As impossible as it may sound, new mothers who want to shed pounds gained during pregnancy need to get plenty of sleep. A Kaiser Permanente study found that women who averaged less than five hours of sleep daily during the first six months after childbirth were likely to weigh at least 11 pounds more than their pre-pregnancy weight one year after childbirth.

NEVER SAY DIET

The world's speed-eating record for crawfish jambalaya is 9 pounds in 10 minutes, held by Sonya Thomas.

MEDTRONICA

Family Practice Notebook

This Web site contains roughly 5,000 topics divided into 31 "books" with titles like Dentistry, Mental Health and Orthopedics. It has plenty of good, if basic, educational fare, plus a few quirks, like an online pregnancy calendar and a fold-your-own paper heart template.

STORIES FOR THE WAITING ROOM

In 1988, a Danish doctor died of a heart attack brought on by a fit of laughter while watching the movie "A Fish Called Wanda." It's believed his heartbeat accelerated from a normal rate of 60 beats per minute to between 250 and 500 beats.

DOC TALK

Hospital hobo - a person, usually homeless, who seeks a medical bed and breakfast by feigning sickness or injury.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Chorophobia - fear of dancing

OBSERVATION

I think we could end a lot of this intolerance in America if we all smoked cigarettes. You'd be hard-pressed to find a cigarette smoker who's prejudiced because we smokers know something that you nonsmokers don't: We're all black on the inside.

- Comedian John Hope

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