

FDA: BPA affects children; exposure should be limited

January 17 2010, By Meg Kissinger

After earlier statements that declared bisphenol A safe for all uses, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Friday that BPA affects human development and said it is working to take the chemical out of infant formula cans and baby bottles.

The agency is also working to require BPA manufacturers to report how much of the chemical they are producing and where it is being used so that it can more easily regulate the chemical.

Friday's action follows three years of investigative reports by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel into the government's failure to limit the chemical's exposure, despite hundreds of studies that found BPA to cause harm.

In a news conference Friday, the agency announced these steps to reduce human exposure to BPA in the [food supply](#).

The steps, posted on the FDA Web site, include:

- Supporting the industry's actions to stop producing BPA-containing baby bottles and infant feeding cups for the U.S. market;
- Facilitating the development of alternatives to BPA for the linings of infant formula cans; and
- Supporting efforts to replace BPA or minimize BPA levels in other

food can linings.

"The FDA is supporting a shift to a more robust regulatory framework for oversight of BPA," FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg announced.

More than 6 billion pounds of the chemical are manufactured each year, accounting for nearly \$7 billion in sales. The chemical is used to line nearly all food and beverage cans. It is used to make hard, clear plastic for [baby bottles](#), tableware, eyeglasses, dental sealants, DVDs and hundreds of other household objects.

The chemical, which leaches into food and drink when it is heated, has been linked to prostate and breast cancer, reproductive failure, obesity, heart disease, diabetes and behavioral problems.

BPA manufacturers, however, have maintained it is safe.

Indeed, the FDA ruled in 2008 that the chemical was safe for all uses _ a decision based on two studies, both paid for by [BPA](#) makers.

The Journal Sentinel found that lobbyists for the chemical industry wrote entire sections of that decision. E-mails obtained by the newspaper found that the [FDA](#) relied on chemical industry lobbyists to examine the chemical's risks, track legislation to ban it and even monitor press coverage.

Linda Birnbaum, who now heads the National Toxicology Program, told the Journal Sentinel in December that people should avoid ingesting the chemical _ especially pregnant women, infants and children.

"There are plenty of reasonable alternatives," she said.

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