

What to do with bisphenol A: Ban it, restrict it, leave it alone?

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Despite years of scientific studies, reports, lawsuits, congressional inquiries, claims and counterclaims, the question of whether bisphenol A (BPA) poses health threats to people lacks a definitive answer, according to a package of articles on the controversial substance in the current edition of Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), ACS's weekly newsmagazine.

In the articles, C&EN Senior Correspondent Stephen K. Ritter explains that BPA has been used in an array of consumer goods since the 1950s. Today it is a mainstay ingredient in hard plastics in some reusable drink containers, DVDs, eyeglass lenses, cell phones, auto parts, sports safety equipment, and other products. BPA also is a key component of the protective coatings inside food and drink cans, dental sealants, and cash register receipts.

Not surprisingly, BPA shows up in the urine of almost everyone, Ritter writes, noting that scientists have known since the 1930s that BPA has estrogenic effects, mimicking the action of the female sex hormones. Hundreds of laboratory studies with test animals and cell cultures have linked those effects to a range of human health problems. Yet the debate about what to do with [BPA](#) — ban it, restrict it, leave it alone — continues because government regulators question whether the methods used in those studies accurately portray BPA's potential health effects in humans.

More information: pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/89/8923cover.html

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