

Toxic BPA turning up in children's soup cans: group

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Worrying levels of BPA, an industrial chemical with suspected links to cancer, lurk inside canned soups and pasta targeted at American children, the Breast Cancer Fund said Wednesday.

In a product testing report, the non-profit advocacy group -- which focuses on environmental causes of cancer -- said an average of 49 parts per billion of BPA, or [bisphenol A](#), was detected in a dozen cans of food items tested.

"Every food sample tested positive for BPA," with Campbell's Disney Princess and Toy Story soups testing the highest," said the group, which is pressing canned [food producers](#) to embrace alternatives to BPA.

Best known as a hardening agent in plastic bottles, BPA is also widely used to line the inside of metal cans, but a raft of scientific studies have pointed to a possible link with cancer and other illnesses.

Earlier this year, the European Union banned the use of BPA in the manufacture of [baby bottles](#). Its use in infant [food containers](#) is also restricted in Canada as well as 10 US states.

"We're concerned about BPA because it disrupts the body's delicate hormonal system," Gretchen Lee Salter, policy manager at the Breast Cancer Fund, told AFP by telephone from San Francisco.

"There's a toxic chemical in our canned foods marketed to children, and

it doesn't belong there."

In its tests, the group found levels of BPA ranging from 148 ppb in a can of Campbell's Disney Princess Cool Shapes shaped pasta with chicken and chicken broth to 10 ppb in a can of Campbell's SpaghettiOs with meatballs.

Earth's Best, Annie's Homegrown and Chef Boyardee products were also tested, with eight of the 12 cans found to have BPA levels in excess of the 49 ppb average.

It was unclear why there was such a wide variation between the cans tested, or why [cans](#) bought in California were liable to have higher BPA levels than those from Wisconsin.

But Salter said that previous [laboratory experiments](#) have suggested that some foodstuffs are liable to provoke greater toxic leeching from BPA packaging than others.

Pending sweeping legislation to ban BPA across the board, the [Breast Cancer](#) Fund urged parents to avoid canned foods and instead feed their youngsters dry or frozen pasta, fruit, or soup packaged in paper-based containers.

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