

By e-mail: letters@guardian.co.uk
Alok Jha, Science correspondent

1. February 2008

Dear editor,

Re: "Hot water `increases baby bottle chemicals`", Guardian, 30. January 2008

In your recent article you report about a study by Scott Belcher et al on Bisphenol A (BPA) migration from polycarbonate bottles. We were surprised to see that although you quote a spokesperson from Greenpeace on this topic, you do not give any corresponding quote from industry, scientists or regulators. This is a very one-sided and incomplete presentation of the topic, and it might mislead the readers about the safety of products made from BPA-based materials such as polycarbonate bottles.

We are writing to make you aware of some facts regarding this study.

Firstly, the study does not contain any new information concerning migration levels of BPA as the levels reported are consistent with data already published in a number of existing comprehensive studies. Secondly, the levels reported are well below the threshold defined by the European Authorities: In fact, from the measured levels a daily uptake of BPA can be derived that would be by a factor of more than 100 below the uptake considered to be safe by the European Food Safety Authority EFSA - thus rather confirming the safety of polycarbonate bottles.

This is also supported by a recent far more comprehensive study in which researchers from the Official Food Control Authority of the Canton of Zürich and the Norwegian Food Safety Authority investigated the release of BPA from polycarbonate baby bottles in worst case scenarios. They concluded: "With this understanding of the mechanisms of BPA formation and transfer into beverages it seems possible to confirm that even under extreme conditions and scenarios the amount of BPA released from polycarbonate baby bottles is clearly below the TDI* for babies." (* TDI = Tolerable Daily Intake)

We would like to assure you and your readers that the chemical BPA has been rigorously tested and is approved for use in consumer articles, including baby bottles, by regulators all over the world. Consumers can therefore continue to use polycarbonate products with confidence. The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, the American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare all share this view. We would appreciate if you would make this information available to your readers.

For further information, please refer to the BPA website at www.bisphenol-a.org.
The EFSA statement you will find www.efsa.europa.eu/en/science/afc/afc_opinions/bisphenol_a.html
The Grob et al study is available at http://matportalen.no/Matportalen/artikler/2007/11/taateflasker_av_polykarbonat_er_trygge_i_bruk
(for the actual paper go down the page and open the document "Rapport tateflasker 2007").

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

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