

BPA FOUND IN 91% OF CANADIANS¹

Jake Richardson[©]

A research report from Statistics Canada found that the chemical Bisphenol A is in 91 percent of the Canadian population. Based on a two-year survey from 2007 to 2009, the Statscan report measured exposure levels to over 80 chemicals. In the Canadians tested, the survey documented a mean BPA concentration of 1.16 micrograms per liter of urine sampled. Children between the ages of 6 and 11 had higher concentrations than adults over 40. Teenagers had the highest levels. It was the first time bisphenol A had been measured nationally in Canada. In the study, BPA was measured in 5,476 respondents aged 6 to 79 at 15 sites. For each respondent, a face-to-face interview was coupled with urinary analysis. General demographic and lifestyle information were gathered during the interviews.

Bisphenol A is used mainly in plastics. Exposure to the public could come from many consumer products like polycarbonate baby and water bottles, cash register receipts, and tin cans. Some research studies indicated the chemical could cause problems with brain development in infants and children. Other studies have investigated a possible connection to cancer. Over two years ago, Canada banned BPA in baby bottles.

While it may be distressing to learn BPA is so widespread within a large number of people, some encouraging information also was revealed by Dr. Rick Smith, executive director of advocacy group Environmental Defense and author of a book called "Slow death by rubber duck." According to Smith, "[t]he average BPA molecule is flushed from the human body in less than six hours. If we can just get BPA out of a few key areas in our lives, levels in our bodies will come down very, very quickly." Limiting contact with various products known to contain BPA could reduce levels in the body.

Canada is moving toward listing Bisphenol A as a toxic substance. The chemical has been temporarily banned by the government of Denmark.

¹ Care2, healthy & green living, August 29, 2010