



Clear and Plastic Danger: The Alien in Your Kitchen

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Plastics are one of the major achievements of the 20th century. Today, they permeate our daily lives in just about every way that you can imagine, and they in our lives to stay. Plastics play an important role in almost every aspect of our lives. Look around you and you'll see that you are surrounded by things that are made with plastic: Furniture, soda bottles, cell phones, cups and glasses, computers, credit cards, door knobs, car parts, toothbrushes, hair combs, pens, TVs and VCRs, CDs and DVDs. Every time you buy something at a store you get a plastic bag. Last year the U.S. produced over 100 billion plastic bags, and sold over 30 billion bottles of "spring water". Most of them have ended up in landfills and will not decompose until, maybe, sometime in the next century. Of all the plastic items around, the most common are associated with our food and drink: plastic bottles, drinking cups, baby bottles, sippy cups. The list is long, and these objects that we so easily put up to our mouths are quite ubiquitous. We certainly take for granted, the unspoken assumption that all these items are safe for our use. With the plethora of plastics being manufactured today, there is one common ingredient that is used to make polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins in most plastics. It is called Bisphenol-A, or BPA, as it is more familiarly known. BPA is a carbon-based synthetic compound used in the making of clear, hard plastics that has been in use by the plastic industry for over 50 years. BPA has become the plastic's industry miracle compound. It only has one problem; BPA does not behave itself well in the kitchen around food. While BPA has been regarded as safe for decades, recent research using sophisticated analytic techniques clearly show that accumulated and prolonged exposure to BPA can interfere with our endocrine system and cause a range of ill health consequences, including reproductive problems and cancer. This is the story of the alien in your kitchen as relates to a clear and plastic danger to your health.