

Concerns over BPA plastic are growing

By Matthew Perrone
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A chemical used to make baby bottles and other shatterproof plastic containers could be linked to a range of hormonal problems, a preliminary report says.

The federal National Toxicology Program said yesterday that experiments on rats found precancerous prostate tumors, urinary-system problems and early puberty when the animals were fed or injected with low doses of the plastic chemical bisphenol A, sometimes known as BPA.

Although such animal studies provide only "limited evidence" of bisphenol's developmental risks, the group's draft report stresses that the possible effects on humans "cannot be dismissed." The group is made up of scientists from the Centers for Disease Control, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health.

Most Americans are exposed to trace amounts of bisphenol, which leaches out of water bottles and other items made with it.

The American Chemistry Council, which represents manufacturers, said the report "affirms that there are no serious or high-level concerns for adverse effects of bisphenol A on human reproduction and development." The group said it supports additional research to determine whether effects of the chemical on animals "are of any significance to human health."

The toxicology group's findings echo those of researchers assembled by the National Institutes of Health, who last August called for more research on bisphenol in humans.

The FDA said in November that there is "no reason at this time to ban or otherwise restrict its use."

But growing concern about the chemical has pushed many consumers toward glass alternatives and has triggered investigations by state and federal lawmakers.

Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., called on the FDA yesterday to reconsider the safety of bisphenol, saying the toxicology report's findings "fly in the face of the FDA's determination."

Nation

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A French ship blew up at the harbor in Texas City, Texas; another ship exploded the next day. Nearly 600 people died.

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