

Baby Step Toward Full Ban on BPA in Food Packaging

Consumer pressure led infant-formula makers to go BPA-free; FDA announces official ban on chemical in formula

For Immediate Release: July 11, 2013

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WASHINGTON—By issuing a ban on bisphenol A (BPA) in infant-formula packaging today, the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration confirmed](#) that the entire U.S. infant-formula industry has stopped using BPA, a toxic chemical that has been linked to breast cancer, infertility, obesity and other disorders.

“This is another milestone in the people-powered movement to get BPA out of our food. Consumers demanded BPA-free baby formula, and manufacturers finally did the right thing,” said Janet Nudelman, director of program and policy at the Breast Cancer Fund. “The writing is on the wall for canned food makers. If the entire infant-formula industry was able to go BPA-free, there is no earthly reason why canned food manufacturers can’t follow suit.”

While the formula industry voluntarily moved away from BPA because of consumer pressure, the FDA’s decision will now make it the law of the land that the chemical cannot be used to line formula cans now or in the future. The FDA took the action as a result of a petition filed by Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) last year. This action is similar to the July 2012 FDA ban on BPA in baby bottles.

In imposing this ban, the FDA has still not made its long-awaited determination on BPA’s safety, despite the fact that nearly 200 lab studies show that exposures to even low doses of BPA, particularly in utero, are associated with a wide range of adverse health effects later in life, including breast cancer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found BPA in 93 percent of all Americans tested. Food packaging including food cans, which are lined with BPA, are a major route of exposure. BPA has been found in the blood and urine of pregnant women, in the umbilical cord blood of newborns and in breast milk soon after women gave birth.

The infant-formula industry shift away from BPA, which mirrors earlier moves by baby-bottle makers, is in stark contrast to the industry’s stance just a few years ago, and testament to the power of the growing body of scientific evidence and the explosion in consumer demand for BPA-free products. In 2010, when the California legislature was debating a bill that would have banned BPA from infant formula, industry engaged in fierce lobbying against the bill, which was defeated, though similar bills did pass in Connecticut in 2009, Vermont and Maryland in 2010, and Nevada this year.

Gretchen Lee Salter, expecting mom and leader of the Breast Cancer Fund’s [Cans Not Cancer campaign](#), was on the frontlines of those state legislative battles, and says that while she’s heartened by this small step toward banning BPA, it’s still not enough. “If BPA isn’t safe for babies, then it’s certainly not safe for my 2-year-old or even for me during my pregnancy,” said Lee Salter. “It’s frustrating that we’re still having this conversation. None of us—not babies, not kids, not pregnant moms—should be exposed to this toxic chemical.”

In his statement Markey applauds the FDA for agreeing to his request. “This is a major victory for America’s families, and I join with parents in celebrating safer feeding time for their babies now that this toxic chemical will forever be banned from infant formula.”

“However, some other industries are ignoring consumer concerns and continue to poison our food supply with this dangerous chemical by including it in other food and beverage packaging, including most canned goods” continued Markey. “With viable alternatives available for BPA, I urge all companies to abandon the use of this toxic chemical, and I will continue my work in the Senate to ensure our entire food supply is free from this damaging chemical.”

Markey's full statement: <http://markey.house.gov/press-release/markey-petition-fda-brings-end-use-toxic-chemical-infant-formula-packaging>

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The Breast Cancer Fund is the leading national organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposures to toxic chemicals and radiation linked to the disease. www.breastcancerfund.org