

CHOOSING SAFER PLASTICS



Center For Health, Environment & Justice
www.chej.org



OKAY

PLASTICS LABELED #1

Polyethylene terephthalate (PET or PETE)

No known health hazards.
Commonly recyclable.

Used in: water, sports drink, and soft drink bottles; ketchup and salad dressing bottles; and peanut butter, jam, pickle and jelly jars.



OKAY

PLASTICS LABELED #2

High density polyethylene (HDPE)

No known health hazards.
Commonly recyclable.

Used in: opaque milk, water, juice and shampoo bottles; yogurt and margarine tubs; cereal box liners; and grocery, trash and retail bags.



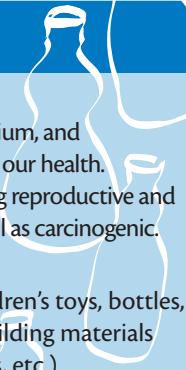
BAD

PLASTICS LABELED #3

Polyvinyl chloride (V or PVC)

Can leach phthalates, lead, cadmium, and organotins, chemicals harmful to our health. Phthalates are suspected of being reproductive and developmental toxicants, as well as carcinogenic. Suspected endocrine disruptor.

Used in: Shower curtains, children's toys, bottles, packaging of products, and building materials (flooring, siding, wall coverings, etc.)



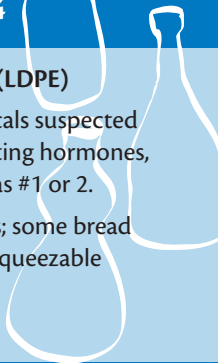
FAIR

PLASTICS LABELED #4

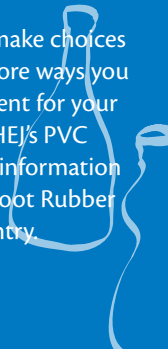
Low density polyethylene (LDPE)

Not known to leach chemicals suspected of causing cancer or disrupting hormones, but not as widely recycled as #1 or 2.

Used in: Grocery store bags; some bread and frozen food bags; and squeezable bottles.



We hope you find these tips useful as you make choices for your family. Visit our website to learn more ways you can create and sustain a healthy environment for your family! Sign up to receive alerts from CHEJ's PVC Campaign, learn about cutting edge news, information and meet Betty the BeSafe Ducky, our 20 foot Rubber Duck making news across the country.





FAIR

PLASTICS LABELED #5

Polypropylene (PP)

Not known to leach chemicals suspected of causing cancer or disrupting hormones. Not as widely recycled as #1 or #2.

Used in: Rubbermaid, deli soup containers; straws; some ketchup bottles, yogurt and margarine tubs; and clouded plastic containers and baby bottles.



BAD

PLASTICS LABELED #6

Polystyrene (PS, Styrofoam)

Benzene, a known human carcinogen, is released in production process. Contains butadiene and styrene – suspected carcinogens.

Used in: Styrofoam food trays; egg cartons; disposable cups and bowls; carryout containers; foam insulation; and some toys.



BAD

PLASTICS LABELED #7

Other (usually polycarbonate)

Made with bisphenol-A, a chemical that mimics estrogen and is suspected of contributing to abnormal reproductive development, birth defects and prostate and breast cancer. Bisphenol-A can leach into foods. Leaching increases as products age.

Used in: "Sport" water bottles; clear plastic sippy cups and baby bottles; microwave ovenware; eating utensils; and plastic coating in metal cans.

**New bio-based plastics, which have not been found to have negative health impacts, may also be labeled #7.

HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



CHOOSE Safest products for your needs. Natural products are usually safer like glass, wood or organic fibers. See www.chej.org for alternatives.

AVOID #3 PVC the Poison Plastic also known as vinyl, and #6 and #7 plastics.

PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic or vinyl is dangerous to your health and the environment throughout its life cycle, at the factory, in our homes, and in the trash. Our bodies are contaminated with chemicals released during the PVC lifecycle, like mercury, dioxins, and phthalates, which may pose irreversible life-long health threats. When produced or burned, PVC releases dioxins, which can cause cancer, harm the immune and reproductive systems.

CHEJ's PVC Campaign encourages major companies to phase out their use of PVC. We've convinced Wal-Mart, Target, Sears, Kmart, Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, and others to phase out their use of PVC in packaging and/or products! We want to leverage these victories and invite you to be part of this successful effort.

CHEJ wants to extend our deep gratitude to the Oregon Environmental Council who designed and researched the pocket guide and allowed CHEJ to use and modify it. Thanks

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ)

www.CHEJ.org | 703-237-2249

Mentoring a Movement, Empowering People, Preventing Harm