

# Canada initiates inquiries into bisphenol A

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The governments of Canada and the province of Ontario are looking at the possible toxicity of bisphenol A, a chemical used in manufacturing polycarbonate and epoxy resins.

The federal agency Health Canada is examining some 200 chemicals, including bisphenol A, to assess their risk. A deadline recently passed for companies to provide information on the chemicals, and now Health Canada is studying potential risks, said Health Canada spokeswoman Joey Rathwell.

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Meanwhile, the Ontario government started its own study on bisphenol A after a Nov. 20 protest rally in Toronto. Although details are vague, the government plans to appoint a panel that will examine how to reduce the amount of bisphenol A used to

make baby bottles.

The study will be part of a strategy to protect consumers' health by reducing pollution and affording protection against exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products. Tackling the bisphenol A issue will be a priority, the govern-

ment said in a news release.

Steve Hentges, executive director of the polycarbonate/BPA unit of the plastics division of the American Chemistry Council in Arlington, Va., said it is arguable whether Health Canada needs to examine bisphenol A, after all the international work that already has been done, but it is part of a bigger exercise that is not centered on bisphenol A.

But Hentges said Ontario's program is unnecessary, given that Health Canada already has a study under way.

Bisphenol A detractors tend to focus on animal studies where

test subjects were injected with bisphenol A, according to Hentges. But most human exposure is oral, through food and beverages, and the chemical is metabolized into products with no known human activity. Therefore injection studies are not very relevant to actual exposure, he said.

A U.S. government panel released its findings in August, concluding bisphenol A's effects on human reproductive health are minimal.

A comprehensive report on the findings was released online Nov. 27 at [cerhr.niehs.nih.gov/chemicals/index.html](http://cerhr.niehs.nih.gov/chemicals/index.html).