

## PLASTIC CHOICES

*From Children's Health Environmental Coalition*

### Reducing Your Risk of Exposure to Chemicals from Plastics

These simple steps will help you reduce the use of plastics for food packaging and storage. Since plastics are more or less unavoidable in certain instances, you may wish to use only these less toxic plastics: [#1 PETE](#), [#2 HDPE](#), [#4 LDPE](#) and [#5 PP](#). While these plastics may also leak chemicals into foods, no studies to date suggest that these chemicals are [hormone disruptors](#), or that they cause cancer or other ill health effects.

#### Packaging

- Choose refillable containers! Glass, for example, can be re-used for food storage.
- Choose packaging that's made from truly recyclable materials: paper, glass, metal cans. (Purchasing recycled paper products completes the recycling loop!)
- Bring your own container to salad bars, yogurt shops, etc. — any place you'll be served in plastic!
- Buy in bulk, whenever possible. It's the least-packaged option.
- For wrapped foods, choose butcher paper, waxed paper or cellulose bags.
- Bring cloth bags to your supermarket to carry groceries home.
- Choose #1 (PETE) or #2 (HDPE) whenever plastic cannot be avoided! These are the most commonly recycled plastics.
- Avoid plastics that aren't readily recyclable: #3 (PVC), #4 (LDPE), #5 (PP), #6 (PS), #7 (often polycarbonate).
- Avoid single-use, disposable packaging.

#### Storage

- Avoid plastics that leach questionable chemicals: #3 (PVC), #6 (PS), #7 (often polycarbonate).
- Avoid plastic cutlery and dinnerware. Use stainless steel utensils and look for recycled paper products.
- [Microwave](#) foods and drinks in oven-proof glass or ceramic dishes with lids. Never let plastic wrap touch food while in the microwave!
- When purchasing cling-wrapped foods from the supermarket or deli, slice off a thin layer where the food came into contact with the plastic and store the rest in a glass or ceramic container, or non-PVC cling wrap.
- See the [Plastics Product Chart \(PDF\)](#) to help you identify which brands of plastic containers and wraps are safer.

In addition to shopping with these things in mind, you can also write a letter to manufacturers of food and drink packaged in plastics, indicating your concern about plastics and how they negatively impact our health, our children's health, and the health of our environment — especially if their packaging is #3, #6, #7. Tell them you are actively seeking products packaged in safe, reusable glass, metal, recycled paper, as well as bulk-packaged items that use resources most efficiently. Contact manufacturers through their toll-free question/comment, usually listed on the back of the product, and ask for a mailing address.