

## Companies graded on getting chemical BPA out of cans

By Liz Szabo, USA TODAY



The marketplace is responding faster than federal regulators to consumer concerns about [BPA](#), an estrogen-like chemical used to line most metal food and beverage cans, a new report shows.

Companies such as [H.J. Heinz](#), [ConAgra](#) and Hain Celestial have begun using BPA-free linings in some of their cans and have set timelines for eliminating the chemical from all products, according to a report by Green Century Capital Management, an investment advisory firm, and [As You Sow](#), an environmental advocacy group.

Most food cans use lining with the chemical bisphenol A. "Fresh fruits and vegetables may be more expensive, but I believe that the risk is too high not to spend the extra. The entire life of that individual may be altered by a few months of BPA exposure in pregnancy," says obstetrician Hugh Taylor.

Each of those companies received an A in the report, which graded 26 companies on their progress toward phasing out BPA as well as for the transparency of their efforts.

Many others — such as [Coca-Cola](#), Delmonte, [Safeway](#) and [Wal-Mart](#) — got failing grades for failing to commit to getting rid of BPA, or [bisphenol A](#), linked to a variety of health problems in hundreds of animal experiments and a small, but

growing number of human studies.

Some retailers say they're working hard to go BPA-free. Last year, only 7% of companies had timeliness to phase out BPA. This year, 32% have set timelines, the report says. Most large baby bottle makers already have stopped using BPA.

Joe Dickson of [Whole Foods](#), which earned a D+ in the scorecard because it hasn't set a deadline for eliminating BPA, says 27% of the chain's store-brand cans are BPA-free. Whole Foods was among the first to stop selling baby products made with BPA, in 2006, he says.

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) and National Toxicology Program, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have expressed "some concern about the potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior and prostate gland of fetuses, infants and young children." The FDA hasn't taken any action to reduce exposure to BPA.

Industry groups contend BPA is safe. John Rost, chairman of the North American Metal Packaging Alliance, says manufacturers need time to test any substitutes for safety, to make sure that they meet federal guidelines, a process that could take four to seven years.

Report author Emily Stone says consumers don't need to wait for scientists to answer every last question.

Many are voting with their shopping carts, she says. "This is definitely a story about consumers having a lot of power with the big companies," Stone says. "Investors and shareholders have a big impact, as well."