

# Press Release

21<sup>st</sup> January 2015

## **Breast Cancer UK's Response to the European Food Safety Authority's Re-evaluation of Bisphenol A**

### **Consumers urged to exercise caution**

**London:** Breast Cancer UK urged consumers to “exercise caution” today and to continue to avoid unnecessary exposure to the hormone disrupting chemical, Bisphenol A (BPA), found in many common plastic products. The call came as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) concluded its re-evaluation of the chemical's exposure and toxicity, declaring that: “it poses no health risk to consumers of any age group (including unborn children, infants and adolescents) at current exposure levels.”

“Today marks a missed opportunity for breast cancer prevention. There are now many studies that suggest that BPA can have effects at very low levels and this was EFSA's opportunity to call for tougher safety measures that prohibit the use of BPA in food and drinks packaging. Instead, EFSA's announcement could lull the public into a misguided sense of security when it comes to exposures to the hormone disrupting chemicals like BPA (1),” said Chief Executive of Breast Cancer UK, Lynn Ladbrook.

“We urge everyone to continue to exercise caution when choosing their products and to avoid unnecessary exposures to harmful chemicals in their daily lives (2), especially when pregnant,” she added.

Recent advances in knowledge led EFSA to temporarily reduce the exposure level it deems safe for BPA, from 50 to just 4 micrograms per kilogram of body weight per day ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$  of bw/day). EFSA states that exposure from diet or from a combination of sources (diet, dust, cosmetics and thermal paper) is “considerably under” this new, safe level, yet Dr Trine Husøy, part of its own expert Panel and Chair of the BPA working group underlined that there is insufficient data to measure some exposures, “which really increases the uncertainty of estimates from thermal paper and cosmetics”. She also states: “...they add to the overall uncertainty about BPA-related hazards and therefore have not been considered in this assessment.”

Breast Cancer UK considers the important outcomes of this re-evaluation to be that EFSA has accepted the safety levels of exposure to BPA must be tightened and that its own experts warn that there is a lack of data to conclude it is safe to use in certain items,

such as cosmetics and till receipts. It is also important to note that EFSA accepts there are still “uncertainties” surrounding potential health effects of BPA on the mammary gland, reproductive, metabolic, neurobehavioural and immune systems.

“In light of the continued uncertainties over the safety of this and other hormone disrupting chemicals, we strongly advise the public to continue to “play it safe” and try to find alternatives to hard plastics that contain BPA: no level of exposure to this chemical should be considered ‘safe’,” she added.

An EU-wide ban on the use of BPA in baby feeding bottles came into effect in January 2011. France ‘s new law, banning the use of BPA in all food packaging and thermal receipt paper came in on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

There is a wealth of scientific evidence that BPA mimics oestrogen and disrupts the hormone system, thereby affecting the development of mammary glands. BPA has been linked to breast cancer, as well as to prostate cancer, endometriosis, heart disease, obesity and diabetes. It is also thought to affect brain development and behaviour.

(1) For further information:

*‘Body of Evidence: An Overview of the Low Dose effects of Bisphenol A in relation to breast cancer’* at: [www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reports/Body\\_of\\_Evidence.pdf](http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reports/Body_of_Evidence.pdf)

Executive Summary at:

[www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reports/Body\\_of\\_Evidence\\_Exec\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reports/Body_of_Evidence_Exec_Summary.pdf)

Breast Cancer UK’s BPA factsheet:

<http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/science/bcukfs-bpa/>

*‘Prevention is Better than Cure’* at:

[www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/uploads/1901BCUK\\_Manifesto\\_web-1.pdf](http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/uploads/1901BCUK_Manifesto_web-1.pdf)

(2) For tips on how to reduce exposures see: [www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reduce-your-risk](http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/reduce-your-risk)