

DECODING PLASTIC



OVERVIEW:

We encounter plastic daily; it's become an unavoidable part of modern life. But how can you sort the good plastics from the harmful ones that can leach chemicals like BPA and others into our food, drinks, and environment?

To investigate which plastics are safer for you and your family than others, check the Plastic ID Code on the underside of the item, and use this guide to decode the meanings.

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Plastic ID Code Guide

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PET/PETE Polyethylene Terephthalate

Traits: Thin, clear

What to know: Safe for one-time use. Limit shelf time, exposure to sunlight, and high temperatures to avoid leaching of toxic metal antimony.

Found in: Water and soft drink bottles, condiment containers, peanut butter



HDPE High-Density Polyethylene

Traits: Thick, opaque

What to know: Limit refilling containers. Considered a low-toxin plastic, yet can still release limited estrogenic chemicals.

Found in: Milk and juice containers, cleaner and shampoo bottles, cereal box liners, grocery bags



PVC Polyvinyl Chloride

Traits: Rigid or flexible

What to know: Stay away. PVC contains numerous toxic chemicals and is one of the worst health and environmental offenders.

Found in: Deli and meat wrappers, mattress covers, shrink wrap, some food and detergent containers



LDPE Low-Density Polyethylene

Traits: Soft, flexible

What to know: One of the safer plastics, although it can still release limited estrogenic chemicals like HDPE. Use with caution.

Found in: Grocery and garbage bags, bread bags, hot/cold beverage cups, household plastic wrap



PP Polypropylene

Traits: Hard yet flexible

What to know: Tolerant of heat. Considered a low-toxin plastic and is one of the safer plastics.

Found in: Straws, medicine bottles, ice cream and yogurt containers, diapers



PS Polystyrene

Traits: Rigid

What to know: Do not microwave. When heated, polystyrene can release styrene, a suspected nerve toxin and carcinogen. Avoid if possible.

Found in: Styrofoam coffee cups, egg cartons, disposable dinnerware, meat trays, packing materials



OTHER

Traits: Miscellaneous

What to know: This is a catch-all designation including both bio-based/green plastics and more harmful polycarbonate plastics. Do your research, and avoid polycarbonate.

Found in: 5-gallon bottles, baby bottles, polycarbonate plastics

