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CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF THE HUDSON VALLEY

PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

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APRIL 1, 2010 - CHILDREN'S HEALTH ADVISORY

BISPHENOL A (BPA) & CHILDREN'S HEALTH

April 1, 2010: Bisphenol A (BPA), a common component of many plastics, has become a growing public concern. Scientists have learned that BPA in epoxy resins and polycarbonates used in food packaging and production can migrate into the food itself. Although exposure to BPA is virtually ubiquitous in the US, the levels found in people remain low, and therefore, until recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has allowed its use in food packaging.

New research findings have prompted the FDA to revisit this policy and they are currently investigating their position. At the Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley, scientists and physicians have been actively investigating the health effects of BPA and other reagents that are released from plastic products.

Dr. Diane Heck, Professor of Environmental Health at New York Medical College, comments, "We are in a unique position to offer information and advice about plastics and health."

Facts:

• BPA was discovered in 1891 and its estrogenic properties recognized by Edward Charles Dodds, a British medical researcher at the University of London in the 1930s.

• When BPA is polymerized (linked together in long chains) it forms a hard plastic called polycarbonate. This plastic is strong enough to replace many metals and clear enough to replace glass.

• BPA is found in polycarbonate plastics commonly used in the home including plastic food storage containers. Previously polycarbonate baby bottles were common, though many manufacturers have voluntarily removed many from the market.

BPA, which can be found in plastics, identified as recycling number 7 on the bottom of the container, is also found in a broad array of food and drink packaging. BPA is also commonly found in many metal coatings, liners of food cans (6 billion pounds a year), the insides of water pipes, dental fillings, water coolers and bottles, plastic tableware and food storage containers, some medical devices, as well as in additional consumer items including sunglasses CDs and DVDs electronic equipment, some automobile parts and sports equipment

At doses higher than children and adults are likely to encounter, BPA has estrogenic effects in many scientific assays and is considered a potential endocrine disruptor. Endocrine disruption is the widely accepted thesis that some chemicals interfere with the production, processing, and transmission of hormones in the body and disrupt the normal functioning of the endocrine system. It is not yet known exactly what cumulative effects, if any, may result from exposure by children to low doses over long periods of time.

The effects of BPA and other endocrine disruptors are currently under investigation in the National Children's Study. This study is a federally funded collaborative project designed to examine environmental influences on the health and development of 100,000 children across the United States, from before birth until age 21. The goal is to improve the health and well being of children. Scientists at New York Medical College are participating in this landmark study.

In 2008, the faculty at New York Medical College and the physicians at the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital at Westchester Medical Center, both in Valhalla, New York, came together to open the Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley. The Center's website is www.childrensenvironment.org.

As noted, Center professionals continue to monitor the emerging information about BPA and other substances considered potentially harmful to children.

With office locations conveniently located in Westchester County and several other sites in the Hudson Valley, the Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley provides clinical consultations for children and their families by appointment.

Visit www.ChildrensEnvironment.org or call (914) 493-7585 for more information.