

Plasticides Anyone?

A bunch of people around me have been discussing safe plastics since recent news reports. Studies show that plastic can leach endocrine disrupting phthalates and carcinogenic dioxins into food and water stored in plastic. This is especially true when used in the microwave. Here is what I have learned: In order to avoid leaching chemicals into your food, the safest plastics for you and the environment are:

- #2 (HDPE) is recyclable and durable
- #1 (PET or PETE) containers are recyclable and a good **single use** plastic, but shouldn't be reused.
- #4 (LDPE) is a food-safe plastic, used to make food wraps and plastic bags.
- #5 (PP) (#5) is less recyclable, but has not been shown to leach carcinogens or endocrine disruptors.

Avoid these plastics for your health and the environment:

- #7, polycarbonate, contains bisphenol-A, a hormone disruptor, that may leach into contents. Nalgene sports bottles and some baby bottles are polycarbonate.
- #3, (PVC) releases carcinogenic dioxins into the environment when manufactured or incinerated and can leach phthalates.
- #6 (PS) (#6) can leach styrene, a possible human carcinogen.

For more information, check out the smart plastics guide:
<http://www.iatp.org/foodandhealth/>

All plastics can leach chemicals under particular circumstances. It is always advisable to avoid micro-waving in plastic. Old and worn plastic containers may contain bacteria. To be safe, use metal, tempered glass or ceramic when possible.

Some places in Seattle where you can buy small metal containers perfect for lunches include:

- Daiso
(206) 625-0076
400 Pine Street
In the Westlake Center, Metro level 98101
Seattle, WA 98101
- Traveler's
(206) 329-6260
501 E Pine St, 98122

Kim Armstrong (sustainability co-chair, Bertschi parent council)