



Why stainless steel over plastic?

Why, the answer is leaching. All plastics are not created equal. Read on to distinguish between plastics, but know overall glass or stainless steel is a much safer way to store your beverages and food.

Plastic contains chemical additives, some of which can leach out and may increase the risk of birth defects, developmental delays, and certain hormone related illnesses, such as breast and prostate cancers.

According to a number of university studies, heat releases these harmful additives into the food you are heating up, so never use plastic in your microwave.

Most people use their dishwasher to clean their plastic storage containers. Washing plastic in warm water reduces the likelihood of chemical leaching.

Scratched plastic also can increase the prospects of leaching, so don't use abrasive sponges or harsh cleansers when washing plastic. Be aware of scratches on water bottles or in dishes caused by utensils.

Most plastics are made from crude oil; however there is a new line of plastics called food grade made from starches such as rice, corn, and soy. They are biodegradable and recyclable, and their production is generally better for the environment and your health than that of conventional plastic. There are still concerns with these plastics regarding the use of fertilizers and pesticides used in the production of these plastics, so look for an organic label.

Decoding Plastics:

On the bottom of plastic containers used for packaging, you'll see a number inside a triangle. It's a code developed by the plastic industry to make sorting plastics easier for recycling centers; it also indicates what type of plastic the container is made of.



PETE, aka PET (polyethylene terephthalate)

Used for most transparent bottles, such as water, soda, cooking oil, and medicine bottles. Generally safe to use (not reuse); generally recycled.



HDPE (high density polyethylene)

Sturdy, rigid plastic found in reusable food storage containers, milk and detergent bottles. Generally safe; generally recycled.



PVC (polyvinyl chloride)

Used for plastic wrap, and detergent and cooking oil bottles. Also used for water systems in households. Additives in PVC can increase the risk of birth defects and hormone-related cancers. Its production can be hazardous to workers and the environment. Generally not safe; not recycled.



LDPE (low density polyethylene)

Flexible plastic used for bags or wraps, such as produce bags and baby bottle liners. Most number 4 plastics are not designed for reuse. Generally safe; generally not recycled.



PPE, aka PP (polypropylene)

Pliable plastic found in squeeze bottles, reusable food containers, and yogurt and margarine tubs. Generally safe; generally recycled.



PS (polystyrene)

Used in rigid take out containers and foam meat trays. Can leach styrene when heated, a possible endocrine disrupter and human carcinogen. Not safe when heated; generally not recycled.



Other most often refers to PC (polycarbonate)

This plastic is most commonly used for baby bottles, five gallon water jugs, and reusable sports water bottles. It can leach out the hormone disrupter bisphenol A, especially when heated. Because this group can include various other plastics, it has limited recycling potential.