



Styrene Information and Research Center (SIRC)

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February 26, 2010

**Styrene Information and Research Center  
Statement on Polystyrene with Respect to Bisphenol A**

Polystyrene plastic, commonly used in its foam and solid forms for disposable foodservice items, is not made with nor does it contain the chemical bisphenol A (BPA).

BPA is added to some other plastics to make them more durable. For example, adding BPA to epoxy linings for steel cans can extend the shelf life of the canned goods and prevent bacterial contamination without affecting taste. BPA has come under scrutiny in recent years due to health concerns.

Polystyrene foodservice products are found in the home, office, local grocery, fast-food outlet and cafeteria. Many health organizations endorse single-use foodservice products made from polystyrene because they lessen food-borne illness in hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and cafeterias. Polystyrene foodservice has contributed significantly to safe foods for consumers for more than 50 years, and is regulated and deemed safe for consumers by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Polystyrene foodservice containers (typically marked with the number 6 to assist in plastics recycling identification) come in many shapes and forms, including foam egg cartons, meat and produce trays, soup bowls, hinged-lid containers (clamshells), hot and cold drink cups, and cutlery. Many of these items typically are made from foam polystyrene, which often is improperly called "Styrofoam"<sup>1</sup>. Foam polystyrene sometimes is referred to as expanded or expandable polystyrene (EPS).

Clear salad clamshells, cutlery, and clear plastic drink cups typically are made from solid polystyrene, sometimes referred to as oriented polystyrene (OPS).

For additional information about polystyrene foodservice containers, contact the American Chemistry Council's Plastics Foodservice Packaging Group, [www.americanchemistry.com/pfpg](http://www.americanchemistry.com/pfpg).

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<sup>1</sup> Styrofoam® is a trademark for polystyrene thermal insulation manufactured by The Dow Chemical Company.