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February 2015 EcoFacts



Know your Plastics



Plastic #7

Plastic #7, Other Plastics

The number seven represents all "other" plastics. This includes polycarbonates, a group of plastics easily molded and thermoformed. They are used in beverage bottles, baby bottles, safety glasses, automotive headlamp covers and compact discs. Most polycarbonates contain Bisphenol A (BPA) and/or Bisphenol S (BPS). Both of these are known endocrine disrupters and have been linked to a whole host of hormonal dysfunctions of particular concern to developing fetuses.

Some plastics labeled "7" are *compostable* bio-based polymers, but these are *not recyclable*.

They're made of Polylactic Acid (PLA), derived from renewable resources, such as corn starch, tapioca or sugarcane. Products made from PLA will biodegrade easily in a commercial composting facility.

What You Can Do

Avoid the use of polycarbonate plastics when possible, choosing materials that are safer and easier to reuse or recycle. Many haulers will not recycle plastic # 7 so it's important to check with your recycler before purchasing or discarding. Neither Omaha's curbside recycling program nor Lincoln's drop off centers accept #7.

Policy

Plastics represent a large portion of recyclable materials in our landfills. Talk to your local representative about banning plastics from landfills and/or making recycling mandatory. Press your governmental representative to support strong reforms to the Toxic Substances Control Act

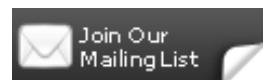
(TSCA), so that it will limit human exposure to substances like BPA. Under current law, companies can sell and use chemicals without showing they're safe. For more information on this topic, see <http://www.edf.org/health/policy/chemicals-policy-reform>.



Visit www.wastecapne.org for all the information you need for recycling in Nebraska.



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