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# The Mommy Files

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## BPA in dental sealants: What parents need to know

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*Bisphenol A, better known as BPA, is a controversial substance that some experts think is harmless, while others believe it's causing all sorts of problems in kids, from ADHD to early onset puberty. If you're a parent, you probably know that BPA is found in some hard plastic bottles and the linings of canned food but did you know that it's also often in dental sealants? A new study says you probably don't need to worry about your kids getting sealants but pregnant women should steer clear.*



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BPA found in dental sealants: Should parents be concerned?

A new study, published in the [October issue of Pediatrics](#), indicates that many dental sealants used to treat and prevent cavities in children and adolescents contain BPA, and BPA levels in saliva can spike to 88 times higher than normal immediately after a dental sealing.

The materials in the sealants, or white fillings, are broken down by enzymes in saliva, releasing BPA into the mouth. How much actually gets absorbed into the body is not known.

The most significant window of exposure to BPA is during and immediately after the material is placed in the mouth. To reduce exposure, study authors suggest that dentists rub the material with pumice to remove the top liquefied layer of sealants. Rinsing the surface with water for 30 seconds immediately after application also has been shown to decrease salivary BPA levels to nearly baseline.

Experts say the benefits of sealants in treating kids' cavities outweighed risks associated with BPA.

"People shouldn't be scared by this," Dr. Burton Edelstein, chairman of social and behavioral sciences at the Columbia University College of Dental Medicine and a co-author on the study, told [MSNBC](#). "The amount of exposure is extremely low. And the layer that contains BPA can be wiped off with cotton or rinsed off with a stream of water that can then be suctioned away by the dental assistant."

But while the study authors are saying sealants are probably safe for kids, they're telling pregnant women to [wait on dental procedures](#) involving BPA-associated resins until after childbirth.

My daughter recently had three cavities filled at a pediatric dentist office in San Francisco's Laurel Village, and even though this study indicates that parents shouldn't worry too much about BPA in white fillings, I was curious to know what my kids' dentist is using.

Turns out her dentist, Doris Lin-Song, uses a BPA-free sealant called [UltraSeal XT Plus](#). Phew!

I called [Ultradent Products, Inc.](#), the company that makes the product, which was initially released in the early 1990s.

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The Mommy Files: A local mom's take on raising kids by the Bay.

By Amy Graff, Read Bio

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"We tested all ingredients in an outside lab to make sure they didn't contain any BPA," company spokesperson Ida Baghoomian told me. "We're concerned about BPA and want to make sure dentists are using the highest quality product on their patients."

The actual risks of BPA are still a matter of debate but over the past decade a growing body of scientific studies has linked the chemical to breast and prostate cancer, infertility, obesity, and neurological and behavioral changes, including autism and hyperactivity.

A September 2008 study in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) found that higher levels of urinary BPA is associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes and liver-enzyme abnormalities.

BPA has been restricted in Canada and some U.S. states and municipalities because of potential health effects.

Posted By: Amy Graff (Email, Twitter, Facebook) | September 08 2010 at 12:53 PM

Listed Under: [Health: kids](#)

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