KNOW THE NUMBERS
Quick Guide to Safer Plastics

Recyclability numbers on plastic containers are typically stamped within the triangular recycling symbol and tend to be very small. Use a magnifier to help find and read the transparent numbers.

1 Contains polyethylene terephthalate. Used to package water, juice, soft drinks, salad dressings, peanut butter, and oil. Can leach out toxic antimony and phthalates in the plastic. **Don't reuse.**

2 Contains high-density polyethylene made from petroleum. Used in milk jugs, plastic bags, and yogurt cups. **There appear to be no health concerns.**

3 Contains polyvinyl chloride. Used in cling wrap, condiment bottles, teething rings, and toys. Can leach out toxic lead and phthalates, among other things. **Use should be avoided.**

4 Contains low-density polyethylene. Used in grocery bags, food storage, and juice and milk cartons. **There appear to be no health concerns.**

5 Contains polypropylene. Used for bottle caps, storage containers, plastic cups and baby bottles, kitchenware, and yogurt and margarine tubs. While #5 plastic will not warp when heated, glass containers are preferable when microwaving foods. **There appear to be no health concerns.**

6 Contains polystyrene, also known as Styrofoam. Used in disposable knives and forks, egg cartons, foam cups, and restaurant to-go packaging. Can leach out chemicals that can cause cancer and neurologic or blood problems. Leftover restaurant foods should be repackaged in glass or stainless-steel containers. **Styrofoam cups and plates and plastic utensils should be avoided.**

7 This catch-all category includes a variety of plastics that may or may not contain bisphenol, commonly used in making polycarbonate plastic and epoxy resins. Bisphenol can be found in liquid infant formula cans, food storage containers, toys, and plastic baby bottles. It can mimic the effects of estrogen and cause a range of adverse actions. The letters PC may be present within the recycling symbol to indicate polycarbonate. **This plastic should be avoided.**