Hot Dogs and Bisphenol F – A Summertime Classic!

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SAFETY

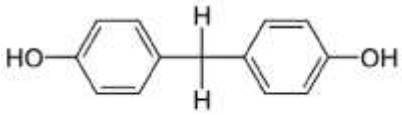
There's still plenty of time this summer to fire up the grill and make some tasty hot dogs for a classic summertime meal. Slip one into a toasted bun with some relish and mustard, add the secret ingredient bisphenol F (BPF), and you'll be in hot dog heaven.

That secret ingredient really isn't a secret anymore since a group of Swiss government scientists reported last year that BPF is commonly present at significant levels in mustard. Very recently, a follow-up study from German government scientists at the Bavarian State Office for Health and Food Safety provided some important new information on the source of the BPF.

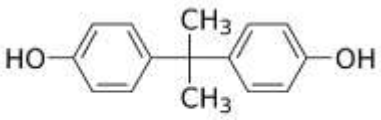
The new study, published in the Journal of Consumer Protection and Food Safety, verified that BPF is formed from a chemical named sinalbin, which is naturally present in yellow mustard seeds used to make milder mustards. When the seeds are processed with vinegar (and other ingredients) to make mustard, a chemical reaction takes place to convert sinalbin to BPF.

The German scientists also confirmed the presence of BPF in all of the 46 mild and medium-hot mustards they tested, in most cases at levels that exceeded the current European limit for bisphenol A (BPA) in food. It's now very clear that we've been consuming naturally produced BPF at significant levels for a long time, yet there are no studies linking mustard consumption with any health effect.

You don't have to be a PhD chemist to understand the significance of these findings. At a glance it's clear that BPF closely resembles its chemical cousin BPA.



Bisphenol F



Bisphenol A

It's well known that BPA is weakly estrogenic and has been controversial due to claims that it causes health effects at low exposure levels. It's also well known that BPF is weakly estrogenic, although its potential to cause health effects has been less well studied.

As noted by the Swiss scientists last year, these findings "*shed a new light on the risk linked to the family of bisphenols and in particular to the controversially discussed BPA*." In particular, these findings support what governments worldwide already know: BPA poses no risk to human health as it's currently used. The perspective of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as expressed in a Q&A on its website, could not be any clearer: "*Is BPA safe? Yes*."

As to hot dog heaven, should we take a pass on the mustard? Not according to the experts at the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR). After the news on BPF broke last year, the BfR experts stated: "*After careful consideration of the currently available data …BfR concludes that a health hazard to the consumer through the consumption of BPF-containing mustard according to the current state of knowledge is not likely.*" (translated from German)