



Welcome from the Director, Barbara Cohn

Happy Holidays to you from all of us at the Child Health and Development Studies. I hope you will enjoy this newsletter. We are excited about continuing to find ways to protect the health of our communities.



ReThink Plastic Study - By Marie Loverde

We have all seen the images and the headlines. Single use plastics have become an integral part of our lives – for example, Americans use an estimated 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour.



However the bags, straws, and water bottles we use once and throw away end up most often in landfills as well as the ocean. According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, every piece of plastic ever made still exists today and more than five trillion pieces of plastic are already in the oceans. By 2050, Foundation analysts believe there could be more plastic in the sea than fish, by weight.

Not only are plastics harmful to the environment but chemicals in plastics are harmful to human health. The ReThink Plastic pilot study will develop an education program to reduce exposure to the toxic chemicals (hormone disruptors) found in plastics. The education program will help people of all ages

reduce their exposures. The program is based on family, friendship and community relationships. We will recruit and train people and ask them to spread the word in their networks. Finally, we plan to evaluate how well the program recruits, trains and influences participants and their social contacts.

My individual involvement in the ReThink Plastic Study is as a Community Partner co- Principle Investigator (Co-PI) and it has been a fantastic learning experience. As the Co-PI in this study, I am assisting the researchers in the development of materials and the study design. We are working on the recruitment flyer and fact sheets, as well as the pre- and post-tests. We are also composing the educational materials for the intervention as well as “tips” and “hacks” to help participants reduce their exposure. I am constantly surprised at how much time is spent on the slightest detail, from carefully picking the perfect “word” to working closely with the graphic designer on brochures to educate and motivate participants to rethink their consumption habits.

While we still face many challenges ahead, I am hopeful we can help get the word out to affect change in behavior by teaching people how and why it is important to reduce plastic use. While I consider myself a long time casual-conservationist, I still find that there are changes I can make to reduce my own and my family’s plastic use and the exposure to harmful chemicals in plastic. Every step, no matter how small, adds up in the long run.

How to Handle Your Holiday Leftovers? **-By Laurie Havas**

For most of us the holidays include gathering around tables laden with foods prepared by family and friends. When the party’s over decisions about parceling out ‘ leftovers begin. Current trends are to use less or no plastics to reduce the growing burden of plastic waste throughout the world and to protect us from the personal health hazards associated with plastics.



What are the other alternatives to plastics, and which ones are the safest? **The information available online and elsewhere can be confusing. Below I give my own tips for how to store and reheat food.**

Some alternatives for food storage include glass, ceramic, porcelain, stainless steel, wood and silicone. Glass, porcelain and ceramic are excellent storage choices. They are smooth and nonporous so they won't collect harmful bacteria. Mason jars are simple, inexpensive and readily available for storing food. One criticism is that glass is heavy and breakable. Heat safe glass such as Pyrex can be used for storing and reheating. Stainless steel is a good choice but it can be expensive and is not microwaveable. Wood has natural antibacterial properties, but long term storage such as freezing may not be appropriate and reheating isn't an option. Silicone can be used for freezing and reheating in the same container. However, in the presence of foods containing fats such as oil, silicone may leach toxins. In most cases silicone, glass, and stainless steel are also dishwasher safe.

Additionally, some care is needed when selecting the type of cover or lid. Avoid plastic wraps which contain PVC, aluminum foil which may leach harmful chemicals, bleached waxed paper (the bleaching process uses dioxins that can leach into the environment and ultimately back into our food supplies, and paraffin is a petroleum product), and bleached parchment paper. Consider using unbleached, soy coated waxed paper, unbleached parchment paper, glass or silicone lids. Plastic lids are not safe for re-heating.

Finally, if you're a recipient of someone's generosity consider bringing your own containers.

Suggested resources:

<https://healthylifeharbinger.com/2011/06/30/not-so-hidden-kitchen-dangers-part-two/>

Ask Barbara:

In every newsletter we plan to answer questions from readers like you! So please info@chdstudies.org with your health concerns or questions and we will choose one to answer in future e-newsletters. **If your question is chosen you will win a \$10 Amazon gift card!** Remember to provide your name and best contact information in your email so that we can get in touch with you if you are the winner.

Dear Barbara: I know I should reduce my use of plastics but cutting them out of my life altogether is hard. If there is one thing I can do to help reduce my exposure to the harmful chemicals in plastic what would it be?

Dear CHDS cohort member: It is difficult for me to choose just one thing--- I have two things:

First: Use frozen or fresh food instead of canned food because the cans have plastic liners that can contaminate your food.

Second: Try not to eat food or beverages that are heated in plastic containers or placed in plastic containers when still hot. This means:

- *NEVER microwave any food or drinks in plastic or to-go containers or plastic wrap—use microwave-safe glass, porcelain or ceramic containers instead.*
- *Eat fewer meals of HOT TAKE-OUT FOOD because they are often packed in plastic.*
- *If your frozen ready- to- eat meal comes in a plastic container—take the food out of the plastic container first and then microwave it in microwave-safe glass, porcelain or ceramic dishes or containers.*
- *Ask to have your hot to-go beverages placed in your own glass or stainless steel bottle or cup, not in a disposable paper cup and not in a plastic bottle or cup.*
- *Re-use glass jam jars or the microwave-safe glassware and porcelain you already have in your kitchen for heating food in the microwave--- like glass pie plates and glass baking pans.*

I hope that this helps.

Sincerely,

Barbara

Support Our Research!



The CHDS has an exciting new study that will illuminate how undiagnosed celiac disease can impact a family for generations.

[Please donate today!](#) **We hope to meet a matching grant deadline of \$25,000 by December 31, 2016.** Donations are tax-deductible and 100% of the funds will go to the CHDS for the purpose of this research. Please share the link to our crowdfunding campaign. Thank you in advance for any assistance you can provide in spreading the word to your friends, family and colleagues.

Celiac disease is caused by a combination of genetics and environment. So a well-documented multigenerational study, like the CHDS cohort, is the perfect context for research that will help illuminate the impact of undiagnosed celiac disease.



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