

Harmful chemicals in Spanish Food Contact Materials

From farms to storage, to processing and grocery shops, our food comes into contact with lots of different materials. Unfortunately, **those materials are allowed to contain harmful chemicals that can leach into the food we eat and the beverages we drink (1), putting our health at risk.**



What have studies shown?

Harmful chemicals, such as phthalates, bisphenols and fluorinated substances (PFAS) can be present in food contact materials and food packaging.

- A study on single-use tableware intended to be alternatives to plastic found that **several products bought on the Spanish market, including plates and straws, contained PFAS (2).**
- Analysis of 13 fast-food packaging products bought in Spain found that **3 products had been contaminated with fluorinated substances (3).**

Chemicals in our bodies

We are constantly exposed to a cocktail of known and suspected harmful chemicals through air, water, food, consumer products and other routes. Food contact materials can contribute to our exposure to harmful chemicals.

- A study investigating exposure to chemicals in plastics in 20 Spanish adults **found detectable levels of 15 phthalates and bisphenol A (BPA) in every participant (4).**

What are Food Contact Materials (FCMs)?

Materials and products that come into contact with our food, such as storage containers, factory equipment, kitchen utensils, tableware, and food packaging.

96% of Spanish citizens are worried about the impact of chemicals present in everyday products **on the environment (5).**

94% of Spanish citizens are worried about the impact of chemicals present in everyday products **on their health (5).**

Some action has been taken... but not nearly enough

- The Spanish Waste Law **bans bisphenol A and phthalates in food packaging (6).**

However, there is much more to be done in order to properly protect Spanish and EU citizens from harmful chemicals in food contact materials.



Looking forwards

A revision of EU food contact material legislation is underway, presenting a key opportunity to act. We do not merely want to patch the loopholes that allow harmful chemicals in food contact materials. **We are calling for the legislation to be properly updated to ensure the protection of citizen's health, help support a circular economy free from harmful chemicals, and ensure harmful chemicals do not enter the environment. Visit toxicfreefoodpackaging.com for information on actions to take.**

1. Zimmerman et al, 2022. Implementing the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability: The case of food contact chemicals of concern.
2. BEUC, 2021. Towards Safe and Sustainable Food Packaging.
3. BEUC, 2017. New test by European consumer organisations finds toxic substances in fast food packaging.
4. Food Packaging Forum, 2019. Spanish biomonitoring study on plastic exposure.
5. European Union, 2020. Attitudes of Europeans towards the environment - Spain.

6. Food Packaging Forum, 2022. Spain passes comprehensive waste reduction regulation, eases the way for reuse.

