

New Study Finds Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in California WIC-Approved Foods

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, June 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A [new report](#) released today by the [Clean Label Project](#) reveals the presence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in a range of food products approved for California's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program—sparking an important conversation about chemical exposure among some of the state's most vulnerable populations.

The study, funded in part by the Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment, tested 71 WIC-approved food products and found detectable levels of phthalates in more than a quarter of items. These chemicals, commonly used in plastic packaging and food processing, are known to interfere with hormone function and have been linked to developmental, reproductive, and behavioral health issues.

While all products tested complied with California Proposition 65 safety thresholds, the findings underscore a larger issue: the lack of regulatory oversight on food packaging and contact materials that can leach harmful substances into the food system.

"This study is a wake-up call," said Jackie Bowen, Executive Director of Clean Label Project. "Families in the WIC program are doing their best to make healthy choices with limited resources. They deserve to know not just what's in their food—but what it's been in contact with. We want to empower parents and caregivers with the information they need to minimize exposure and make informed, safer choices for their families."

The study found that contamination risk was often linked to packaging type. Products stored in



plastic bags, cans, or jars were more likely to contain phthalates or BPA, even when the food itself was unprocessed. In some cases, a single serving of certain canned or bulk foods could exceed California's "No Significant Risk Level" for chemical exposure.

"Communities served by WIC are already navigating the compounding weight of environmental health disparities," said Marcha Isabelle Chaudry, Founder and CEO of the Equity and Wellness Collaborative and advocacy advisor for the grant. "Finding endocrine-disrupting chemicals in everyday food items only deepens these inequities. We cannot champion health equity without first ensuring that the most vulnerable families have access to food that is truly safe, clean, and nourishing. This is not just a public health issue—it's a matter of justice."

In response, Clean Label Project is urging consumers to:

- Choose fresh or frozen foods over canned when possible
- Avoid microwaving in plastic containers
- Opt for glass or stainless steel for food storage
- Look for "BPA-free" labels—and question what's replacing it

The organization is also calling on policymakers and industry leaders to rethink the role of packaging and supply chains in food safety and invest in safer alternatives and clearer labeling standards.

For more information, a copy of the full report, and practical tips for reducing EDC exposure at home, visit <https://cleanlabelproject.org/wic-endocrine-disruptor-study/>

En español: https://cleanlabelproject.org/clp_californiawicreport_spanish/

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