

**Response from the Ministry of infrastructure and Environment of the Netherlands,
Delivered by Brigitte Dessing.**

- We are glad that societal organizations such as WECF put such an important issue like vulnerability for chemicals during early life on the agenda.
- We recognize that fetuses, babies, toddlers and other children are more vulnerable to external factors such as chemicals.
- We think that obtaining better insight in the effects that early exposure to chemicals may have anywhere in the life-cycle and next generations warrants more attention.
- We consistently work towards improving information requirements in the EU, to assist adequate control of chemicals.
- This is particularly true for the development of the unborn and young child and endocrine disruption.
- The Health Council of the Netherland has issued an advice in 2014 that contains important recommendations on the possible health effects of exposure during pregnancy to hazardous substances in the environment, see: https://www.gezondheidsraad.nl/sites/default/files/201405risicos_van_prenatale_blootstelling_stoffen.pdf in Dutch but with an English Executive Summary.
- RIVM provides information on her website on endocrine disrupting substances, intended to assist pregnant women to reduce exposure during the development of the child in the womb.
- In the Netherlands, a leaflet about how best to assist the healthy development of the child is provided to with women early in their pregnancy and discussed with them by the midwife. This includes a section on tobacco, alcohol, and other products containing hazardous chemicals.
- RIVM issued a report on Bisphenol A in 2016, see: <http://www.rivm.nl/dsresource?objectid=770931cd-b3d5-41cb-badd-f43e26f4bed6&type=org&disposition=inline>
- This RIVM report concludes:
 - BPA may harm the immune system of the unborn child or young children at a lower exposure than previously assumed.
 - This lower level of exposure approximately corresponds to the maximum daily allowable exposure to BPA.
 - As a result of this exposure, children may be more likely to develop food intolerances and may become more sensitive to infectious diseases.
- Exposure to BPA should be reduced. A ban however is not desirable. A ban leads to the use of alternatives, for which there is no clarity about their safety.
- The Netherlands requested EFSA to reconsider the exposure limits for BPA.
- Nationally, plans are being developed with the relevant industries, supermarkets and other shops to reduce exposure of workers.
- In Europe, a number of hospitals have already managed to replace almost all medical devices by Bisphenol and Phthalate free alternatives. In the Netherlands West-Fries Gasthuis is the forerunner.

- The leadership of medical institutions in the Netherlands are being invited by the Ministry of Public Health to adopt this practice in their own hospitals.