Another unnecessary BPA scare for expectant moms

By ACSH Staff — October 15, 2013

If you thought you’d seen all the putative risks to health from the chemical bisphenol-A (BPA), think again. It’s been one of the most frequently cited supposedly dangerous chemicals in fear-mongers armamentaria. Their drumbeat of alarmism persists, although study after study has failed to find a valid link between BPA and dangers to human health. In fact, the FDA (among numerous scientific and regulatory bodies worldwide) has studied it and determined that its use in food cans and other containers is not only safe, but provides an important public-health benefit against food spoilage and contamination.

Now, adding more fuel to the fire is a preliminary study presented at the meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. In that study, led by Stanford University reproductive endocrinologist Dr. Ruth Lathi, researchers examined the outcomes of 115 newly pregnant women who had histories of infertility or miscarriage. Blood samples taken early in pregnancy were analysed for BPA content. Sixty-eight of the women had miscarriages, and 47 completed gestation and had live births.

The analysis revealed that the women in the top 25th percentile for BPA had an 80 percent increased risk of miscarriage compared to those in the lowest 25th percentile. Thus, the investigators suggested that the BPA might be significantly associated with an increased risk of miscarriage. While Dr. Lathi pointed out that the study was small, she suggested that such women should avoid BPA by, among other actions, not handling cash register receipts, and not consuming canned foods (BPA is often used in the lining of food cans).

As ACSH’s Dr. Gil Ross pointed out, This is indeed a small, observational study of women who are prone to miscarriage and infertility as such it is a biased sample. Since BPA is well-known to be rapidly metabolized and excreted, and to have about one-millionth the hormonal power of our natural estrogens, it is inexplicable how any mechanism can be concocted to explain such effects on pregnancy. I would bet that if these researchers studied 100 other substances in these women’s blood or urine, many other quartiles and quintiles of alleged risk could be constructed to scare
moms-to-be about numerous other common, safe chemicals. However, this ridiculous study cannot change the fact that the data on BPA safety is strong and extensive. There is no reason for anyone to be concerned about it.