



# STYROFOAM: TIPS FOR SAFER USE

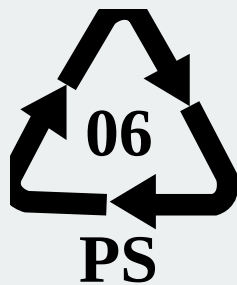


## DO'S

- Serve food on compostable plates that are made of plant-based materials. Safer materials include recycled paper, bamboo, or corn or potato-based plastics.
- Store food or drink in glass containers rather than plastic jars and bottles.
- Use stainless steel, pyrex or ceramic plates, and cups.
- Take food out of its foam containers as soon as possible.
- Bring your own cups, dishes, and utensils to eat and drink with at cafes and restaurants.

## DONT'S

- Avoid foam items with recycle code #6. Code #6 (PS) indicates polystyrene.
- Never heat or microwave food or drink in any foam container, even if the product says “microwavable” or “microwave safe”



## WHAT IS POLYSTYRENE FOAM?

When styrene molecules are linked together polystyrene is created. Polystyrene foam, colloquially but mistakenly called “styrofoam”, is a material used in disposable food and beverage containers. Food or drinks that are hot, oily, or acidic can break down polystyrene in foam containers and cause it to leach into the food.

Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has determined polystyrene foam to be safe for use in food contact materials, many cities have banned it due to its pollution of our air, water and land.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF SOMETHING IS MADE OF POLYSTYRENE FOAM?

Materials made of polystyrene are marked with recycling code #6. Styrofoam products such as cups or plates will be labeled or described as expanded polystyrene, polystyrene, foam, or #6EPS. Other polystyrene products include clear or solid, but flexible, plastic cups, lids, straws, and utensils.

Polystyrene is light weight, squeaky when rubbed, and is usually white or light green.

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL HEALTH CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH POLYSTYRENE FOAM?

Polystyrene has been identified as a possible human carcinogen (cancer causing).

Workers who are exposed to large concentrations of styrene (in the production of polystyrene) have been found to have health issues including lung tumors, leukemia, lymphoma, and possibly pancreatic, kidney and esophageal cancers, as well as respiratory problems, headache, and fatigue.

## ECO-HEALTHY CHILD CARE®

[WWW.CEHN.ORG/EHCC](http://WWW.CEHN.ORG/EHCC)

(202) 543-4033 x 10 | Facebook: @ehcc1

