

The chemical compound contaminating your Friday night glass of wine

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We all know what risks our favourite wines and spirits pose to our health but now scientists reveal that the packaging of these drinks may be just as damaging. Is it time to leave that extra bottle of red on the supermarket shelf?

Phthalate compounds are extremely widespread in our environment and are present in many plastics. Though the subject of much debate, the [toxicity](#) of [phthalates](#) varies depending on their [chemical composition](#) and some compounds are fairly unanimously considered to have a major potential as hormone disruptors.

The use of phthalates is regulated on an international level and includes those likely to come into contact with food and drink packaging. A study published in Food Additives and Contaminants: Part A analysed phthalate concentrations in a variety of French wines and spirits.

The research reveals that 59% of the wines analysed contained significant quantities of one particular form of phthalate, dibutyl phthalate, and only 17% did not contain any detectable quantity of at least one of the reprotoxic phthalates. Perhaps a more worrying statistic the research brings to light is that 11% of the wines analysed did not comply with EU specific migration limits (SML) for materials in contact with food.

The study also analysed a variety of materials frequently present in wineries and found that a large number of polymers often contained high

quantities of phthalates. Indeed, some containers that are coated in epoxy resin proved to be a major source of contamination. The authors of the paper, P. Chatonnet, S. Boutou and A. Plana, advise ending the use of such containers.

More information: "Contamination of wines and spirits by phthalate: Types of contaminants present, contamination sources, and means of prevention", by P. Chatonnet, S. Boutou and A. Plana, *Food Additives and Contaminants: Part A*, published by Taylor & Francis.

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Provided by Taylor & Francis

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