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Plastic bag - A double edge sword

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Plastic is convenient, lightweight, unbreakable and relatively inexpensive. However, there are both environmental and health risk from the widespread use of plastics. Bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical that mimics the action of the human hormone estrogen, can leach from polycarbonate plastic. Bisphenol A has been found to stimulate prostate cancer cells⁷ and causes breast tissue changes in mice that resemble early stages of breast cancer in both mice and humans. Reusable bags for transport of groceries from the store to the consumer's home have become popular in recent years. Since these bags are often reused, and used potentially for multiple purposes, the possibility for contamination of food products as well as the consumer's hands. Most food borne illnesses are believed to originate in the home. Reuse of bags creates an opportunity for cross contamination of foods. Study was to assess the potential for cross contamination of food products from reusable bags used to carry groceries. It is recommended that the public needs to be educated about the proper care of reusable bags by printed instructions on the bags or through public service announcements improper cooking or handling of foods. Reusable bags if not properly washed between uses, create the potential for cross contamination of foods. The common use of bags for other purposes than carrying groceries is also a potential concern. Public unawareness of the potential risks seems almost universal. Thus, a sudden or significant increase in use of reusable bags without a major public education campaign on how to reduce the risk of cross contamination would create the risk of significant adverse public health impacts. Shoppers who do not regularly wash their reusable grocery bags may be placing themselves and their families at heightened risk of food borne illness. Reusable bags, if not properly washed between uses, create the potential for cross-contamination of food. This risk can be increased by the growth of bacteria in the bags. Fortunately, washing the bags by machine or hand reduced bacterial presence to nearly zero. Reusable grocery bags can be a breeding ground for dangerous food-borne bacteria and pose a serious risk to public health. Bacteria levels found in reusable bags were significant enough to cause a wide range of serious health problems and even death. They are a particular danger for young children, who are especially vulnerable to food-borne illnesses.

Biography

Deepika Ramachandra, a final year MBBS student age 22 years from Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute. She is a life member at the Indian Red Cross Society and has visited Mobility India (NGO). She is a National level Athlete and has represented Karnataka. She has got a bronze medal signed by Duke of Edinburg. Last year her project was selected by Maastricht University, Netherland, UK.

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