

# Question

Is it true that aluminum cans and plastic bottles used to package carbonated soft drinks are dangerous – that the aluminum cans cause Alzheimer's disease, and that plastic bottles made with Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) cause cancer?

# Answer

No, the bottles, aluminum cans and other packages The Coca-Cola Company uses are safe. All materials that are designed to come in contact with food or beverages must comply with the safety requirements enforced by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and similar regulatory agencies in all the countries in which our products are sold.

The inner surface of soft drink cans is coated to help keep the aluminum from being absorbed into the beverage. Only a tiny amount of aluminum makes it into beverages, and this is not harmful: You would have to drink about 5,000 12-ounce (360-milliliter) cans to get the same amount of aluminum that you get from one common aluminum-based antacid tablet.

Aluminum is the third most plentiful chemical in nature after oxygen and silicon and is present in virtually all foods, water and air. Some commonly eaten foods that contain aluminum are grains, vegetables, and meat. The Alzheimer's Association has stated that aluminum does not cause Alzheimer's disease.

As for PET, the FDA reviewed the scientific evidence and concluded that it is safe for beverage bottles and other food packaging applications.

- Internet myths have circulated about PET bottles linked to the chemicals di-(2-ethylhexyl) adipate (DEHA) or di-(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP). PET bottles do not contain these chemicals.

- Claims about dioxins from PET bottles seeping into carbonated beverages also make the Internet rounds, but are simply not true. Dioxins are not used in the production of PET bottles.

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand has conducted a special investigation to determine if PET plastic has any cancer-causing agents and found it to be untrue.

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) recently re-reviewed the safety of antimony (a chemical element that occurs naturally in the environment) migrating from packaging to foods and beverages. Trace amounts of antimony absorbed from PET packaging do not present a health concern. Your main exposure to antimony is from breathing air, especially in an urban environment where there are more cars, but it is also found naturally in foods such as carrots and baked potatoes.

## Sources

- Food Standards Australia New Zealand. <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/mediareleasespublications/factsheets/factsheets2003/plasticdrinkbottlesf2230.cfm>
- Urban Legends, Toxic bottles. <http://www.snopes.com/toxins/bottles.asp>
- American Plastics Council, Plastic beverage bottles. <http://www.plasticsinfo.org/beveragebottles>

You would have to consume this many canned drinks' worth of trace aluminum to ingest the same amount of aluminum found in one antacid tablet.

one normal antacid tablet

5,000 12-oz Aluminum Cans

Each dot represents one 12-ounce aluminum can