

F A L L 2 0 1 3

# Healthy Living

Dr Jessica Gurske, Naturopathic Doctor



## The “Safe” Plastic Myth

You can't walk through a store these days without seeing at least a few items with that “BPA-Free” label plastered all over the packaging. But does that really mean the plastic used is safe? Healthy? Or even better?

BPA is a chemical used to make that clear hard plastic you may actually be carrying your lunch in right now. We also know that this chemical can leach out of plastic into our food and eventually into our bodies.

BPA is an endocrine disruptor, meaning it can mimic hormones in our body causing a variety of problems. Specifically, BPA is an estrogenically active compound and has been linked to birth defects, cancers and other health problems. Infants and children are especially vulnerable since their little bodies are less able to detoxify it from their systems.

Exposure can even occur while in the womb since BPA can cross the placental and affect development.

So, I buy BPA-free, no problem, right? *Cont'd page 2.*

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## In this Edition:

- “Safe” Plastic Myths and Healthy Alternatives
- Simple Lentil Soup
- Quick Lunch Ideas for the Whole Family
- Cinnamon- Sunflower Truffles



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## Safe Plastics cont'd

Ever wonder what other kinds of chemicals being used to make plastic could be leaching out of even those BPA-free bottles and containers? Well, so did some researchers, and a study was conducted and published in July 2011 in the Environmental Health Perspectives

(<http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info:doi/10.1289/ehp.1003220>). It took over 400 everyday products that were BPA-free and tested them for other estrogenic chemicals that could still be leaching out under normal stresses (heating, microwave, dishwasher, sunlight, etc.).

What they found: “Almost all commercially available plastic products we sampled—independent of the type of resin, product, or retail source—leached chemicals having reliably detectable EA (estrogenic activity), including those advertised as BPA free. In some cases, BPA-free products released chemicals having more EA than did BPA-containing products.”

When it comes to baby bottles, they found that at least one part of each baby bottle always had an estrogenic chemical that leached out. And the more stress it under went, the more it leached (ie. heating).

So, what to do? Switch to glass! There are many available products on the market at very reasonable prices. A good plastic free water bottle is a must, since it is refilled constantly and often left in a car to heat and cool many times, try a stainless steel bottle such as those from *Kleen Kanteen* or glass such as from *Life Factory*. Or keep it really simple and just hang on to your glass mason jars! Plus, these glass and stainless steel products virtually never wear out and will last a lifetime. And you can rest assured there will be no unwanted chemicals are taking up residence in your meal. The reality is that, it's pretty much impossible to avoid plastics everywhere, but making an effort to use an alternative where you can, can make a huge impact on your health!

## Fragrant Lentil Soup

*From Whole Life Nutrition Kitchen*



- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 large carrots, diced
- 1 tbsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 2 cups green lentils, rinsed and drained
- 8 cups water or vegetable stock
- 2 cups chopped tomatoes
- 4 cups baby spinach leaves
- 1-2 tsp sea salt or Herbamare
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar

Heat olive oil in large pot over medium heat. Add chopped onions and sauté for about 5 minutes or until onion begins to get soft. Add crushed garlic, diced carrots, dried thyme, and garam masala; sauté for another 5 to 7 minutes. Add the lentils and water; cover pot and simmer for about 35 to 40 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes, spinach, sea salt and red wine vinegar and simmer for another 10 minutes more. Enjoy!

# Healthy Make Ahead Lunch Ideas for the Whole Family

## Lentil and Quinoa Salad

A very easy make-ahead lunch that can be done in bulk! Just mix some cooked quinoa (15 min cooking time) and lentils (1 hour soaking, 30 min cooking) with whatever chopped veggies you like (carrots, onions, celery, cucumber, tomatoes (fresh or sundried), peppers, broccoli, etc) and voila!



**Easy Dressing:** Olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, herbs to taste (oregano, basil, thyme, rosemary, etc).

## Soup

Soup is one of the easiest make-ahead bulk meals to make. Just grab your favourite veggies and herbs, simmer in stock until tender and puree for a super simple fresh soup! Root vegetables (squash, sweet potato, etc.) and beans provide a creamy texture for pureed soups. Or try whipping up a vegetable and bean minestrone or a simple lentil soup (recipe on page 2).



**Simple Stock:** Mix 1 onion, 1 leek, 2 carrots, 4 celery stalks, 4 cloves of garlic, ½ bunch parsley, 3 bay leaves, 1 tsp black pepper, fresh herbs (rosemary, thyme, savory, marjoram), 1 tsp sea salt in 12 cups of water, bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 2-3 hours.

## DIY “Lunchables”

Instead of grabbing the preservative laden commercial pack, why not make your own version of this popular convenience lunch. Toss in some chopped veggies, hummus, rice chips, guacamole, raw almonds and walnuts (or seeds for a nut free facility), some fruit and a sunflower truffle or chocolate avocado pudding for dessert!

**Easy Guacamole:** Mas a ripe avocado with lemon, lime, garlic, cumin, salt, pepper and cayenne to taste!



## Salad in a Jar

A convenient way to pack salads for the entire week (or at least a few days in advance!) Grab a mason jar with a wide mouth and start layering! Begin with **dressing** on the bottom, then **hard vegetables** (carrots, cucumbers, peppers, etc.), **beans/grains** (chickpeas, quinoa, etc), **protein** (chicken, hard boiled egg, tuna, salmon, etc.), **soft veggies and fruit** (avocados, tomatoes, strawberries, etc.), **nuts and seeds** (sunflower, pumpkin, walnuts, etc.) and finally top it off with **salad greens**.

**Note:** proteins and soft veggies/fruits are often best added to the top the morning of to keep them freshest!



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## Cinnamon-Sunflower Truffles

Finding fun healthy snacks can be difficult with the ban on nuts from schools. This is a great and tasty recipe for healthy, nut-free energy truffles that provide healthy fats and protein, and all you need is a food processor!

2 cups raw sunflower seeds

2 tbsp ground cinnamon

1/8 tsp sea salt

1 cup pitted medjool dates

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 tbsp maple syrup (if needed)



Place sunflower seeds, cinnamon, and sea salt into food processor fitted with the “s” blade. Process until seeds are very finely ground. Add dates and olive oil. Process again until combined and sticky. Only add maple syrup if needed, check to see if you can form truffle by rolling mixture in your hands, if it falls apart then add sweetener and process again. Scoop out and roll into balls, Enjoy!!

*Adapted from Whole Life Nutrition [www.nourishingmeals.com/2010/01/cinnamon-sunflower-truffles.html](http://www.nourishingmeals.com/2010/01/cinnamon-sunflower-truffles.html)*

## About Dr Jessica



Dr. Jessica Gurske completed her Bachelors of Science at the University of Waterloo. She then went on to complete a four-year intensive Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine program at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto, Ontario and completed two national board exams and provincial licensing. Dr. Jessica also has additional training in facial rejuvenation acupuncture.



Dr. Jessica’s practice is eclectic using all naturopathic modalities for treatment, with special interest in women’s health, weight loss, chronic disease, prenatal health and pregnancy and pediatrics. Dr. Jessica strongly believes in prevention of disease by healthy living. She is registered with the Board of Directors of Drugless Therapy and is a member of the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors (OAND) and Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND).

Dr. Jessica is currently practicing at the Chiropractic Health Centre in Kitchener, ON, as well as, Massage Works KW, also in Kitchener, ON.

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