

The clear choice

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Forget the pricey Hermes handbag. Now, the glass baby bottle is the hot wait-list item this spring.

Spurred by recent studies linking a compound used in some plastic baby bottles to cancer and birth defects, old-fashioned bottles are making a comeback.

But only a few bottle makers offer the glass containers, which now are in short supply. At the Toronto store Baby on the Hip, parents clamouring for glass bottles will have to wait until mid-May for their fix.

Co-owner Gini Bechard says she noticed an upswing in demand after The Globe and Mail ran a piece on the dangers of bisphenol A, a compound found in some plastics, early last month.

Ohio-based Evenflo Company Inc., one of the only makers of glass bottles, has sold out across North America in the last three weeks, according to sales representative Harold Bickerstaff. Now, "Evenflo is going overtime with production," he says.

A shipment of another brand hit the shelves at the Crocodile Baby store in Vancouver 10 days ago. They were gone in three days.

Owner Gerry Lewarne has now started a waiting list for his next delivery - in mid-May. A few years ago, glass bottles were viewed as antiques. Mr. Lewarne's wife, store co-owner Cristina Lewarne, says she had to donate her stock to charity after they failed to sell. "Nobody would buy them because they were afraid they'd break."

Some parents turn to a non-glass option such as bottles by Florida's Born Free LLC, which are made from a plastic that doesn't contain bisphenol A.

Toronto mother Margaret Purcell recently ditched her old plastic bottles and snapped up two Born Free bottles for her 11-month-old baby, Finn.

But bisphenol A is also found elsewhere, including in the lining of tin cans, so Ms. Purcell is still not relaxed.

"It's an invisible substance," she says. "I'm concerned about all of the things it's in."