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Hospira Slices into Plastic Medical Waste with New IV Bags

December 4th, 2009 by [Tina Casey](#)



[I.V. equipment](#) dots the landscape of countless movies and TV shows like [E.R.](#), [House](#) and [Grey's Anatomy](#), so it's no surprise that the ubiquitous little baggies account for a sizeable chunk of **plastic medical waste** from U.S. **hospitals**. Now a company called [Hospira, Inc.](#) has come up with a new kind of I.V. container that could cut about 20 million pounds of that waste annually.

The company's basic innovation is simple: its VisIV "green IV" containers are made from a multilayer plastic film that eliminates the disposable wrapper required to protect [conventional IV containers](#) from moisture. The first generation of VisIV products was introduced in 2006 and was quickly adopted by almost 25% of U.S. hospitals, and the company has just announced a new, even more **sustainable** tweak to its formula.

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An Even More Sustainable Green I.V. Bag

The latest improvement to Hospira's VisIV container is the use of a more recycling-friendly formula in its 50, 100, and 250 mL sized containers. The new containers consist of a two-layer [polyolefin](#) film, using just one type of plastic. Polyolefin is a relatively new class of materials that lends itself to molded flexible foam products such as the familiar [Crocs](#).

A Safer Green I.V. Bag

On top of its contribution toward a more sustainable waste stream from hospitals, VisIV is also made without [DEHP](#), a plasticiser which belongs to the now-notorious [phthalates](#) group. It is (or was) commonly used in medical devices but groups such as the American Academy of Pediatrics are now advising DEHP-free products. VisIV is also made without [polyvinyl chloride \(PVC\)](#), another common plastic that has fallen into disfavor. With the medical industry lining up behind safer plastics, it would seem that the days are numbered for the use of harmful plastics in many other common products, including [plastic shower curtains](#) and even [rubber duckies](#).

Image: Plastic medical equipment by [Mandroid](#) on flickr.com.

Proper IV usage training is available through the [medical assistant program](#) at Sanford Brown.

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About the Author



Tina Casey specializes in military and corporate sustainability, advanced technology, emerging materials, biofuels, and water and wastewater issues. Tina's articles are reposted frequently on Reuters, Scientific American, and many other sites. Views expressed are her own. Follow her on Twitter [@TinaMCasey](#) and [Google+](#).

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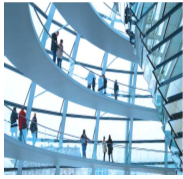


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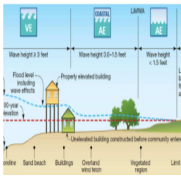
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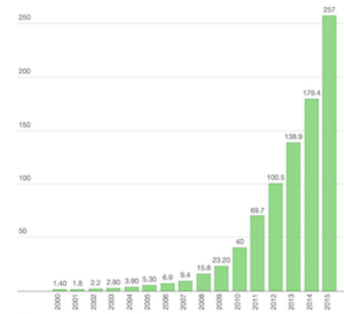
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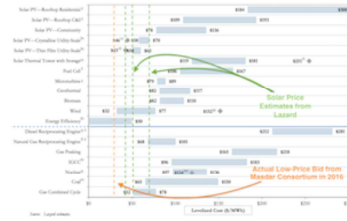
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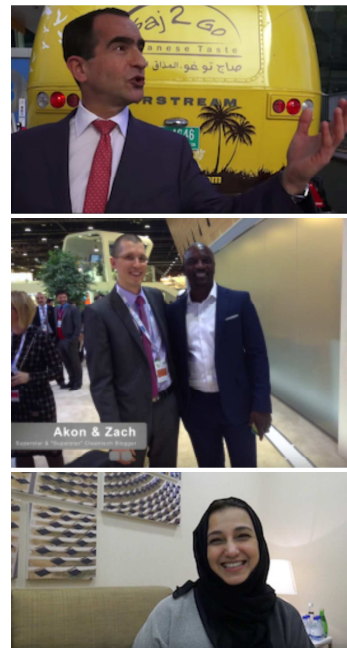
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