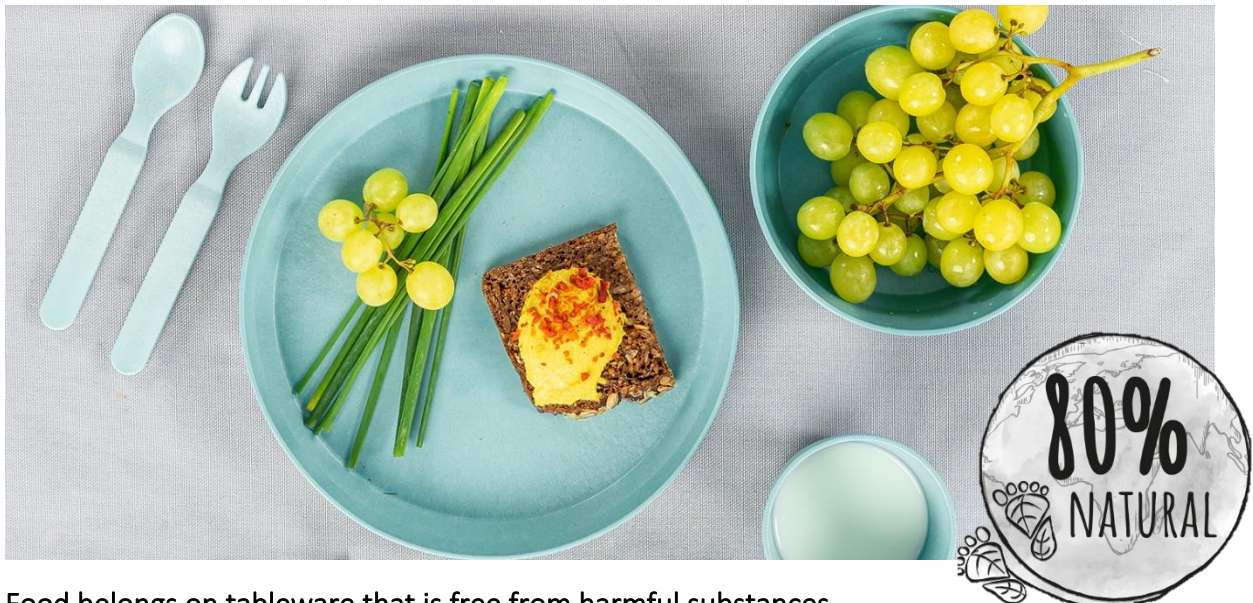


Melamine-free: sustainable children's tableware from reer that is free from harmful substances

Leonberg: Acting responsibly has always played a big role at reer, as the family company's mission is to protect children. This includes reducing hazards not only in the present but also in the future. For this reason, the new 'Growing' tableware is an important part of reer's sustainability strategy. You can find out here what makes Growing sustainable and why reer has decided against melamine and bamboo for its tableware.



Food belongs on tableware that is free from harmful substances

Becoming a parent turns many things on their head and prompts people to question their previous behaviour. This is especially true when it comes to nutrition and food preparation for children. When choosing food, parents are increasingly focused on organic certification and regionality. Consequently, they are also thinking about tableware and do not want to compromise in this area. Here is where it gets tricky: glass and china are good for people and the environment, but they are expensive, heavy, and in particular, fragile. That is why plastic tableware has become so successful: it is colourful, cheap, light, robust and unbreakable, making it extremely practical for everyday family life. BUT is it free from harmful substances or sustainable? Unfortunately, not.

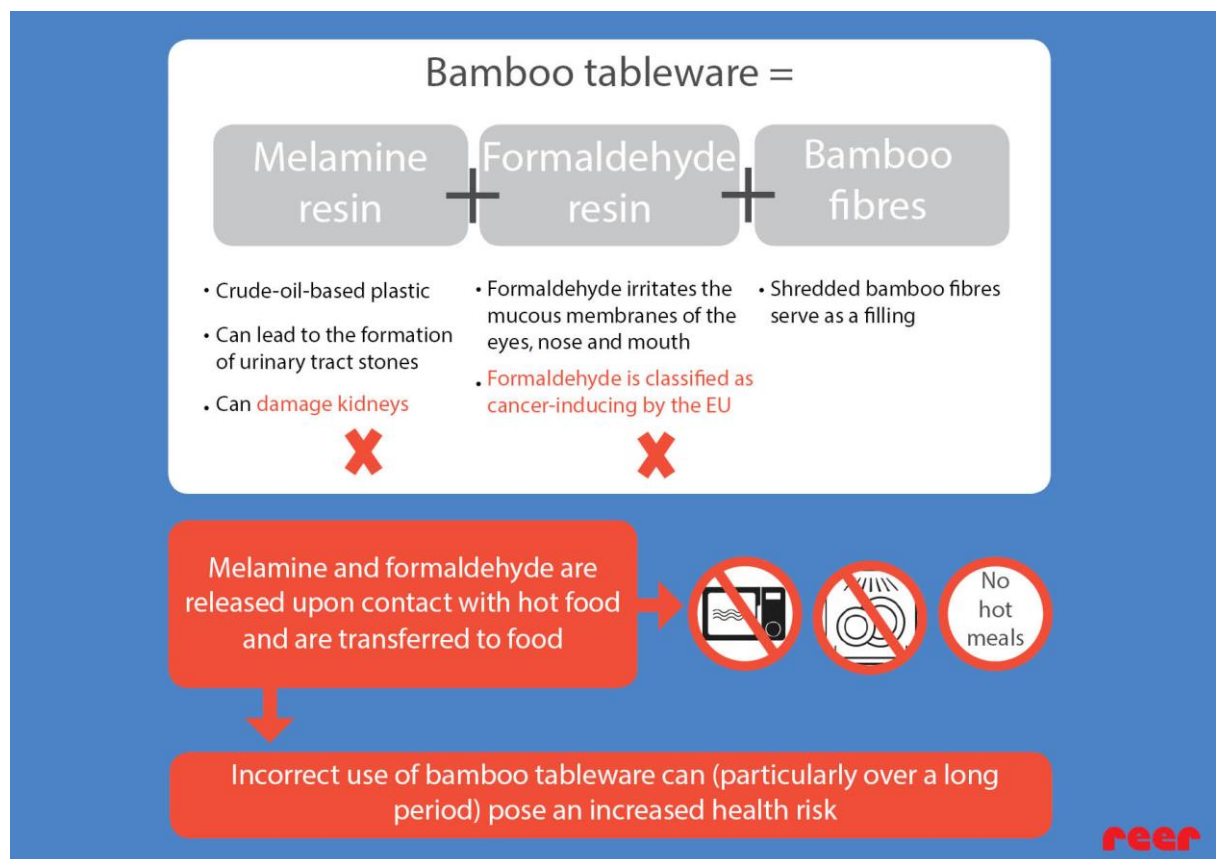
Bamboo tableware: not an alternative due to melamine!

On the lookout for sustainable alternatives that are free from harmful substances, consumers have gratefully welcomed bamboo tableware. At first glance, it offers the same advantages as conventional plastic tableware. In addition, bamboo tableware is promoted as being green, sustainable, and environmentally friendly.¹ What most consumers don't know is that bamboo tableware consists not only of bamboo but also of melamine formaldehyde resin (MF). Bamboo

¹ <https://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/bambooware-freisetzung-von-melamin-und-formaldehyd-in-simulanz.pdf>, page 7

tableware merely contains shredded bamboo fibres as a filler. These are added to the plastic mixture in various proportions depending on the product.

In 2019, there was a huge media response when the results of tests by state monitoring authorities and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) were published. They showed that bamboo tableware sometimes releases high quantities of melamine and formaldehyde when in contact with hot food.² These substances are transferred into the food directly and are consumed with it. **“Formaldehyde is classified as cancer-inducing by the EU. It can lead to cancer in the nose and in the throat, and it can also irritate the skin and mucous membranes and trigger allergies. Melamine can cause kidney stones and kidney damage if it gets into food.”**³ The quantities released in the tests were in some cases considerably above the EU’s migration limits, meaning that the **use of bamboo tableware and of melamine tableware may pose an increased health risk, particularly if products are used for a long time and with hot food.**⁴ The tests may have led to many product warnings and recalls⁵, but bamboo products and melamine products continue to be sold for children.



² https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/fragen_und_antworten_zu_geschirr_und_kuechenutensilien_aus_melamin_for_maldehyd_harz-70413.html, 16.12.2020

³ <https://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/gesundheit/Bambusware-Schadstoffe-in-Bechern-und-Geschirr,bambusware100.html>, 16.12.2020

⁴ <https://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/343/gefaesse-aus-melamin-formaldehyd-harz.pdf>, 13.01.2021, page 2

⁵ <https://www.produktwarnung.eu/2019/11/26/gesundheitsgefahr-geschirr-aus-bambusware-nicht-fuer-heisse-getraenke-oder-speisen-nutzen/16675>, 13.01.2021

Further test results:

- Bamboo tableware released considerably more harmful substances than conventional melamine tableware
- Acidic liquids/food, such as drinks or fruit juices containing carbonic acid, promote the release of harmful substances.⁶
- It is suspected that the release of harmful substances is higher the longer that the tableware is in use.⁷
- To reduce risk, MF tableware should not be used for hot foods (over 70°C). This tableware is not suitable for cleaning in the dishwasher or heating in the microwave.⁸

Growing from reer: sustainable and free from harmful substances



Growing equals renewable



reer's Growing tableware consists of a material mix of 80% renewable raw materials. These include sugar and other carbohydrates as well as wood fibres from Germany. The sugar and the other carbohydrates used are a by-product of food production no longer suitable for direct consumption. The wood fibres in Growing tableware are also by-products from sawmills etc. No extra trees must be felled for this tableware. Instead, resources that were previously unused are employed meaningfully.

⁶ <https://www.ndr.de/ratgeber/gesundheit/Bambusware-Schadstoffe-in-Bechern-und-Geschirr,bambusware100.html>, 13.01.2021

⁷ Öko-Test Magazin 6 2020, pages 78/79

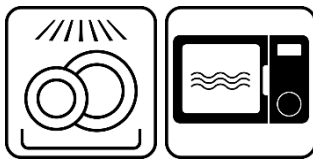
⁸ https://www.bfr.bund.de/de/presseinformation/2019/47/geschirr_aus_bambusware_nicht_fuer_heisse_getraenke_oder_speisen_nutzen-243171.html, 13.01.2021

Free from harmful substances: no BPA, PVC, melamine, or formaldehyde



Growing tableware is not just free from BPA, phthalates, and PVC; it is also free from melamine-formaldehyde compounds. This means that the products are heat resistant. As a result, hot fluids can also be used with Growing products without any worries. This means that they make a valuable contribution to protecting health.

Robust, easy to care for and durable



Particularly when small children are learning to eat, it is completely normal for bowls and cups to be heavily used. reer tableware stands up to the tough conditions involved in everyday use with children and can also be used in the microwave without any problems. The tableware can also be cleaned in the dishwasher, ensuring easy and hygienic cleaning.

Closed carbon cycle for a reduction in greenhouse gases



No extra carbon dioxide is created during the production of the material, making the manufacturing of the sustainable Growing material mix, CO₂ neutral and avoids additional harm to the climate. This means that every cup, every plate, and every item of cutlery makes a small contribution to the avoidance of greenhouse gases.

reer Growing tableware in comparison with bamboo tableware

A comparison of reer Growing tableware and bamboo tableware (see table below) makes it clear that the material used in the Growing range offers clear benefits in relation to impact on health and provides simple and convenient use in everyday family life while being sustainable. Of course, there is still room for improvement. That is why the family company is endeavouring to find a material mix that is also biodegradable. No biodegradable material currently meets the high standards set in relation to safety, durability, and robustness, so reer has been forced into a compromise that considers all requirements in a balanced manner. But if you do not take the first step towards additional sustainability, you will never arrive at a sustainable future.

| Comparison criteria | Bamboo tableware | reer-Growing |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Contains melamine | Yes | No |
| Contains formaldehyde (cancer-inducing) | Yes | No |
| Microwave heating | No | Yes |
| Hot liquids | No | Yes |
| Proportion of sustainable raw materials | different, partly unclear information | 80% |
| Proportion of crude-oil-based materials | Yes | Yes |
| Biodegradable | No | No |

Working towards a better future together

For a better and sustainable future, the global community has specified 17 global goals in its 2030 Agenda. In order to achieve them, all players from politics, civil society, and businesses must take on responsibility together. It is not easy for end consumers to ensure sustainable consumption at present – even when they try. Products that are supposed to be sustainable are emerging as a risk for health and the environment. As a family company, reer takes on responsibility and wishes to make it easier for parents to make their everyday lives more sustainable and to buy products for their children that are free from harmful substances.

Protect what you love – reer's motto

The Leonberg-based company did not just start taking responsibility following the introduction of the 2030 Agenda; the concept has long since been rooted in its philosophy. The motto “Protect what you love” not only encompasses the protection of our children against acute dangers in daily life, but also holistic responsibility for future life on Earth. “We know that change cannot happen overnight. The most important thing is to make a start, as any change is a step in the right direction,” explains Tim Lorenz, Managing Director. For this reason, part of reer's sustainability strategy includes new sustainable products, such as Growing tableware, as well as our long-term partnership with suppliers, a commitment to child sponsorships, charitable organisations, and cooperation with numerous partners in relation to child safety.

For more information visit www.reer.de/en. Discover many product videos on our [YouTube](#) channel or visit us on Facebook and Instagram.

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