

1 **Assaying uptake of endocrine disruptor compounds in zebrafish embryos and**  
2 **larvae**

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14

15 **Abstract**

16 To study the effects of environmental endocrine disruptors (EEDs) on aquatic animals,  
17 embryos and larvae are typically incubated in water containing defined concentrations  
18 of EEDs. However, the amount of EED uptake into the animal is often difficult to  
19 determine. Using radiolabeled estradiol ( $[^3\text{H}]\text{E}_2$ ), we previously developed a rapid,  
20 straightforward assay to measure estradiol uptake from water into zebrafish embryos  
21 and larvae. Here, we extend this approach to measure the uptake of two additional  
22 EEDs, bisphenol A (BPA) and ethinyl estradiol (EE2). As with E2, the uptake of each  
23 compound by individual larvae was low (< 6%), and increased with increasing  
24 concentration, duration, and developmental stage. We found that E2 and EE2 had  
25 similar uptake under equivalent exposure conditions, while BPA had comparatively  
26 lower uptake. One application of this assay is to test factors that influence EED uptake  
27 or efflux. It has been suggested that persistent organic pollutants (POPs) inhibit ABC  
28 transporters that may normally efflux EEDs and their metabolites, inducing toxicity in  
29 aquatic organisms. We measured  $[^3\text{H}]\text{E}_2$  levels in zebrafish in the presence or absence  
30 of the POP PDBE-100, and cyclosporine A, a known inhibitor of ABC transporters.  
31 Neither chemical significantly affected  $[^3\text{H}]\text{E}_2$  levels in zebrafish, suggesting that  
32 zebrafish maintain estradiol efflux in the presence of PDBE-100, independently of  
33 cyclosporine A-responsive transporters. These uptake results will be a valuable  
34 reference for EED exposure studies in developing zebrafish, and provide a rapid assay  
35 to screen for chemicals that influence estrogen-like EED levels *in vivo*.

36

## 37 INTRODUCTION

38 Environmental endocrine disruptors (EEDs) are small molecules that mimic endogenous  
39 hormones. EEDs can negatively impact the health of humans and wildlife by disrupting  
40 endogenous hormone signaling (Diamanti-Kandarakis et al., 2009). Estrogen-like EEDs  
41 are a broad class of EEDs including endogenous compounds like 17- $\beta$ -estradiol (E2)  
42 and synthetic compounds like bisphenol A (BPA), commonly found in manufactured  
43 plastics.

44

45 Aquatic animal models, such as zebrafish, are used to study the environmental impact  
46 of EEDs. One common approach is to expose zebrafish embryos to known and  
47 suspected EEDs and assay their toxicity (Bouwmeester et al., 2016; Carroll et al., 2014;  
48 Gorelick et al., 2014; Padilla et al., 2012; Tal et al., 2016). However, for the majority of  
49 EEDs, information regarding the precise uptake and excretion is lacking. We previously  
50 developed an assay to measure [ $^3$ H]E2 uptake in zebrafish embryos, and found that  
51 supraphysiologic concentrations of E2 in fish water are required to achieve  
52 physiologically-relevant doses in embryos (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). We also found  
53 that E2 uptake is dependent on exposure concentration, duration and developmental  
54 stage (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). We sought to determine if this is also true for other  
55 estrogen-like EEDs, by testing the uptake of the pharmaceutical estrogen analog,  
56 ethinyl estradiol (EE2) and the non-steroidal synthetic estrogen, bisphenol A (BPA).

57

58 In addition to quantifying EED uptake, it would also be useful to identify chemicals that  
59 influence EED uptake or efflux to discover novel mechanisms of toxicity and to

60 potentially inhibit the uptake of toxic EEDs. Major drug transporters like P-glycoprotein  
61 (P-gp) are known to regulate uptake and efflux of an array of structurally diverse  
62 substrates, including xenobiotics and pharmaceuticals (Aller et al., 2009; Ambudkar et  
63 al., 1999). Though previous efforts have investigated P-gp transport of steroids and  
64 xenobiotics *in vitro* (Kim and Benet, 2004), the degree to which P-gp influences EED  
65 efflux *in vivo* is less well understood.

66

67 Using our assay for measuring radiolabeled estradiol uptake, we quantified the uptake  
68 of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA in zebrafish embryos at multiple concentrations, exposure  
69 durations, and developmental stages. We found that less than 5% of EE2 and BPA are  
70 taken up following 24 hour exposure, and that EE2 and BPA uptake are dependent on  
71 concentration, duration, and developmental stage. When comparing E2 uptake to EE2  
72 and BPA, we found that EE2 uptake is similar to E2, whereas BPA uptake is  
73 substantially lower. Additionally, we found that inhibition of *abcb4*, a zebrafish P-gp  
74 orthologue (Fischer et al., 2013), did not affect E2 uptake. Our results support the  
75 hypotheses that supraphysiologic concentrations of EEDs in water are required to  
76 achieve physiologic concentrations *in vivo*. Our results also suggest that  
77 environmentally-relevant concentrations of E2 are not influenced by the drug transporter  
78 *abcb4*.

79

## 80 **METHODS**

### 81 **Zebrafish**

82 Adult zebrafish were raised at 28.5°C on a 14-h light, 10-h dark cycle in the UAB  
83 Zebrafish Research Facility in a recirculating water system (Aquaneering, Inc., San  
84 Diego, CA). All zebrafish used for experiments were wildtype, AB strain (Westerfield,  
85 2000). All procedures were approved by the UAB Institutional Animal Care and Use  
86 Committee.

87

### 88 **Embryo Collection**

89 Adult zebrafish were allowed to spawn naturally in groups. Embryos were collected in  
90 intervals of 10 minutes to ensure precise developmental timing, placed in 100mm x  
91 15mm Petri dishes at a density of no more than 100 per dish in E3B media (60X E3B:  
92 17.2g NaCl, 0.76g KCl, 2.9g CaCl<sub>2</sub>·2H<sub>2</sub>O, 2.39g MgSO<sub>4</sub> dissolved in 1L Milli-Q water;  
93 diluted to 1X in 9L Milli-Q water plus 100 µL 0.02% methylene blue), and then stored in  
94 an incubator at 28.5°C on a 14-h light, 10-h dark cycle until treatment.

95

### 96 **Embryo treatments**

97 For uptake experiments, embryos were treated in tritiated ethinyl estradiol ([6,7-<sup>3</sup>H(N)]-  
98 17α-ethynylestradiol, 1 mCi/mL, 60 Ci/mmol, American Radiolabeled Chemicals Inc.  
99 #ART1321, Lot #170203), tritiated bisphenol A ([ring-3H]-bisphenol A, 1mCi/mL, 25  
100 Ci/mmol, American Radiolabeled Chemicals Inc. #ART1676, Lot #170320), tritiated  
101 estradiol ([6,7-<sup>3</sup>H(N)]-17β-estradiol, 1 mCi/mL, Perkin Elmer NET013250UC), or vehicle  
102 (0.1% ethanol (EtOH)) and diluted to final concentration in E3B at the time of treatment.  
103 ABC transporter inhibitor experiments were conducted using cyclosporin A (Enzo Life  
104 Sciences, #380-002-M100) or 2,2',4,4',6-pentabromodiphenyl ether (PDBE-100)

105 (AccuStandard, #FF-BDE-100N, Lot #26813) dissolved in dimethylsulfoxide (DMSO), or  
106 vehicle control (0.1% DMSO), diluted to final concentration in E3B at the time of  
107 treatment. Rhodamine B (Acros Organics,  $\geq 98\%$  pure, #AC296570100) was dissolved  
108 in methanol (MeOH) and diluted to final concentration in E3B.

109

### 110 **[<sup>3</sup>H] Uptake assay**

111 Isotopic uptake assays were performed as described previously (Souder and Gorelick,  
112 2017). Briefly, embryos were exposed in 24-well plates to 2 mL of treatment solution  
113 per well, ten embryos per well. All embryos were manually dechorionated prior to  
114 exposure and incubated at 28.5°C on 14-h light, 10-h dark cycle unless noted.

115 Radioactivity of individual homogenized embryos was measured using liquid scintillation  
116 counting. Background radioactivity of vehicle-control groups was negligible and is  
117 therefore excluded from graphs. [<sup>3</sup>H] radioactivity was converted to pmol using a  
118 standard curve generated for each chemical (Fig. S1) with a limit of detection of 0.01  
119 pmol for each chemical. For experiments requiring addition of non-tritiated compounds,  
120 drugs were added to the well at the same time as the tritiated compound and DMSO  
121 was used as a vehicle control. No toxicity was observed at the concentrations used for  
122 treatment (not shown).

123

### 124 **Rhodamine B uptake assay**

125 For rhodamine B uptake experiments, embryos were exposed as for uptake  
126 experiments, except that embryos were exposed in the dark to prevent the loss of  
127 fluorescence during treatment. At the end of the exposure period, embryos were

128 washed three times in fresh E3B and 0.01 mg/ml tricaine was added to immobilize  
129 embryos for imaging. Anesthetized embryos were embedded in 3% methyl cellulose in  
130 E3B and imaged on a Nikon AZ100 microscope with Andor Clara digital camera.  
131 Fluorescence was quantified from whole embryos using ImageJ software (Schneider et  
132 al., 2012) by tracing the outline of the entire embryo and averaging the mean gray value  
133 of 10 embryos per experiment.

134

### 135 **Experimental design and data analysis**

136 Experiments were performed on 10 embryos from a single clutch per treatment group or  
137 vehicle control group. Experiments were performed at least 3 times ( $n \geq 3$ ) using  
138 embryos from different clutches. Mean pmol uptake and mean percent uptake from  
139 each group were used for comparing treatment groups between experiments. Mean  
140 integrated density was used to compare fluorescence between RhB-treated groups. A  
141 two-tailed, unpaired Student's t-test was used when testing for statistical significance  
142 between two groups, one-way ANOVA with Tukey's test for multiple comparisons was  
143 used when comparing uptake between  $> 2$  groups, and one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's  
144 test for multiple comparisons was used when comparing fold-change in uptake of  
145 [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2 and [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA versus [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .  
146 GraphPad Prism 7.0a software was used for all statistical analyses and for producing  
147 graphs.

148

## 149 **RESULTS**

### 150 **EED uptake is concentration- and duration-dependent**

151 To test the effect of increasing concentration on chemical uptake, we exposed 48 hour  
152 post fertilization (hpf) dechorionated zebrafish embryos to three different concentrations  
153 of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 (1 nM, 5 nM, 10 nM) or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA (5 nM, 10 nM, 20 nM) for one hour.  
154 Consistent with previous results measuring [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 uptake(Souder and Gorelick, 2017),  
155 the absolute amount absorbed in pmol of both EE2 and BPA increased with increasing  
156 exposure concentration. [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 absorption increased by 11-fold between 1 nM and 10  
157 nM exposure (Fig. 1A, 1 nM treatment =  $0.015 \pm 0.0032$  pmol (mean  $\pm$  SD), 5 nM =  
158  $0.074 \pm 0.0020$  pmol, 10 nM =  $0.17 \pm 0.017$  pmol). [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA absorption was less robust,  
159 increasing by 3.6-fold between 5 nM and 20 nM exposure (Fig. 1D, 5 nM treatment =  
160  $0.015 \pm 0.00088$  pmol, 10 nM =  $0.34 \pm 0.0051$  pmol, 20 nM =  $0.054 \pm 0.017$  pmol).

161  
162 We next tested the hypothesis that increasing exposure duration would increase EED  
163 uptake. We exposed 48 hpf dechorionated embryos to identical concentrations of  
164 [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA for 24 hours. We found that pmol absorption increased as  
165 concentration increased. [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 absorption increased by 9-fold between 1 nM and 10  
166 nM exposure (Fig. 1B, 1 nM treatment =  $0.096 \pm 0.00093$  pmol (mean  $\pm$  SD), 5 nM =  
167  $0.36 \pm 0.062$  pmol, 10 nM =  $0.85 \pm 0.081$  pmol). [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA absorption increased less  
168 robustly, with a 3.3-fold increase between 5 nM and 20 nM (Fig. 1E, 5 nM treatment =  
169  $0.19 \pm 0.034$  pmol, 10 nM =  $0.40 \pm 0.070$  pmol, 20 nM =  $0.64 \pm 0.063$  pmol). For each  
170 concentration, absorption increased when increasing exposure duration from 1 hour to  
171 24 hours by an average of  $5.5 \pm 0.69$  fold for [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 (Fig. 1C), and an average of  $12.4$   
172  $\pm 0.45$  fold for [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA (Fig. 1F). Together, these results demonstrate that the uptake of  
173 [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA are concentration- and duration-dependent.



174

175 We also determined the percent uptake of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA per embryo by dividing  
176 the embryo radioactivity by the radioactivity of the water prior to zebrafish exposure.  
177 Percent uptake remained constant at increasing concentrations for both [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 (Fig.  
178 1A-B; 1 hour exposure: 1 nM = 0.52 ± 0.076% (mean ± SD); 5 nM = 0.54 ± 0.11%, 10  
179 nM = 0.52 ± 0.053%; 24 hour exposure: 1 nM = 3.39 ± 0.16%, 5 nM = 2.88 ± 0.41%, 10  
180 nM = 3.12 ± 0.61%) and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA (Fig. 1D-E; 1 hour exposure: 5 nM = 0.15 ± 0.015%  
181 (mean ± SD); 10 nM = 0.18 ± 0.010%, 20 nM = 0.15 ± 0.041%; 24 hour exposure: 5 nM  
182 = 2.71 ± 1.4%, 10 nM = 2.04 ± 0.080%, 20 nM = 1.81 ± 0.17%)) when holding exposure  
183 duration constant. When comparing exposure durations at each concentration, there  
184 was an average 6.1 ± 0.49 fold increase from 1 to 24 hour exposure for [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and an  
185 average 13.9 ± 2.8 fold increase for [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA. We conclude that percent uptake of  
186 [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA is duration-dependent, but not concentration-dependent.

187

188 Concentrations for [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 were chosen based on concentrations used for [<sup>3</sup>H]E2  
189 uptake experiments. Initial experiments with [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA demonstrated absorption below  
190 the limit of detection (0.01 pmol) in embryos treated with 1 nM [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA, therefore higher  
191 concentrations (5 nM – 20 nM) were chosen for this compound. For subsequent  
192 experiments testing variables other than concentration, the 5 nM dose for [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and  
193 the 10 nM dose for [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA were chosen, as these concentrations were the lowest  
194 concentrations reliably above the assay limit of detection.

195

196 **EE2 and E2 uptake exceed BPA uptake at multiple concentrations and durations**

197 We next sought to compare absorption of the estrogen-like EEDs, EE2 and BPA, to 17-  
198  $\beta$ -estradiol absorption determined by our previous studies(Souder and Gorelick, 2017).  
199 When comparing pmol absorption following 5 nM exposure at 48 hpf, [ $^3$ H]EE2 had a  
200 significantly higher absorption than [ $^3$ H]E2 after 1 hour (one-way ANOVA,  $p = 0.0059$ ),  
201 though there was no significant change in absorption with 24 hour exposure (Fig. 3A,  
202 Table S1,S2; 1 hour fold-change =  $2.02 \pm 0.058$ , 24 hour fold-change =  $1.01 \pm 0.18$ ).  
203 [ $^3$ H]BPA absorption was significantly lower at both exposure durations (Fig. 3A, Table  
204 S1,S2; 1 hour fold-change =  $0.41 \pm 0.025$ ,  $p = 0.0014$ ; 24 hour fold-change =  $0.48 \pm$   
205  $0.085$ ,  $p = 0.0114$ ). Similar results were obtained when comparing 10 nM exposure at  
206 48 hpf for [ $^3$ H]EE2, with significantly higher absorption following 1 hour (one-way  
207 ANOVA,  $p = 0.0028$ ), but not 24 hour, exposure (Fig. 3B, Table S1,S2; 1 hour fold-  
208 change =  $2.26 \pm 0.23$ , 24 hour fold-change =  $1.03 \pm 0.10$ ). [ $^3$ H]BPA uptake was also  
209 significantly lower than [ $^3$ H]E2 at both exposure durations with 10 nM treatment (Fig.  
210 3B, Table S1,S2; 1 hour fold-change =  $0.46 \pm 0.070$ ,  $p = 0.0035$ ; 24 hour fold-change =  
211  $0.48 \pm 0.085$ ,  $p = 0.0048$ ).  
212  
213 Comparing percent uptake of 5 nM [ $^3$ H]EE2 and [ $^3$ H]BPA to [ $^3$ H]E2, we did not see a  
214 significant change in percent [ $^3$ H]EE2 uptake at either exposure duration, likely due to  
215 the increased variability in percent uptake compared to pmol uptake (Fig. 3A, Table  
216 S1,S2; 1 hour fold-change =  $1.41 \pm 0.30$ ; 24 hour fold-change =  $0.75 \pm 0.11$ ). We did,  
217 however, observe a significant increase following 1 hour exposure with 10 nM treatment  
218 (one-way ANOVA,  $p = 0.0071$ ). There was no change in percent [ $^3$ H]EE2 uptake  
219 compared to [ $^3$ H]E2 uptake following 10 nM, 24 hour exposure (Fig. 3B, Table S1,S2; 1

220 hour fold-change =  $1.77 \pm 0.18$ ; 24 hour fold-change =  $0.84 \pm 0.16$ ). Similarly, we did  
221 not see a significant change in percent [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA uptake with 5 nM exposure, but found a  
222 significant decrease in percent [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA uptake with 10 nM exposure (one-way ANOVA;  
223 1 hour exposure:  $p = 0.0163$ , 24 hour exposure:  $p = 0.0042$ )(Fig. 3A,B; Table S1,S2; 5  
224 nM: 1 hour fold-change =  $0.40 \pm 0.036$ , 24 hour fold-change =  $0.71 \pm 0.35$ ; 10 nM: 1  
225 hour fold-change =  $0.61 \pm 0.035$ , 24 hour fold-change =  $0.54 \pm 0.025$ ).

226

### 227 **EE2 and BPA uptake are age-dependent**

228 Studies of EED toxicity expose embryos at multiple developmental stages, beginning at  
229 early embryonic stages and throughout organogenesis, which is largely complete by 5  
230 dpf. To test EED uptake as a function of age, we exposed embryos beginning at five  
231 different developmental stages between 6 and 96 hours post fertilization (hpf) to a  
232 single concentration of [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2 (5 nM) or [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA (10 nM) for 1 hour. For [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2,  
233 mean pmol uptake when starting treatment at 96 hpf was 2.8-fold higher than when  
234 starting treatment at 6 hpf (Fig. 2A, Table S3; 6 hpf treatment =  $0.037 \pm 0.007$  pmol  
235 (mean  $\pm$  SD), 24 hpf =  $0.038 \pm 0.007$  pmol, 48 hpf =  $0.074 \pm 0.002$  pmol, 72 hpf =  $0.072$   
236  $\pm 0.009$  pmol, 96 hpf =  $0.10 \pm 0.006$  pmol). There was not a statistically significant  
237 difference when comparing treatment of 6 vs. 24 hpf embryos (one-way ANOVA,  $p =$   
238  $0.9996$ ) or 48 vs. 72 hpf embryos ( $p = 0.9989$ ), but other comparisons showed a  
239 significant increase in older versus younger embryos (Table S3).

240

241 Mean [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA pmol uptake increased to a greater extent, with a 5.6-fold higher uptake  
242 when starting treatment at 96 hpf versus 6 hpf (Fig. 2C, Table S3; 6 hpf treatment =

243 0.009 ± 0.001 pmol (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 0.012 ± 0.002 pmol, 48 hpf = 0.034 ± 0.005  
244 pmol, 72 hpf = 0.038 ± 0.002 pmol, 96 hpf = 0.050 ± 0.003 pmol). As with [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2, there  
245 was no significant difference in uptake when comparing uptake of embryos when  
246 starting treatment at 6 vs. 24 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.6854) or 48 vs. 72 hpf (p =  
247 0.5343), but all other comparisons were significantly increased when starting treatment  
248 in older versus younger embryos (Table S3).

249  
250 Percent uptake was similarly increased at 1 hour for both compounds. For [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2,  
251 there was a 4.1-fold increase when starting treatment at 96 hpf versus 6 hpf (Fig. 2A,  
252 Table S3; 6 hpf treatment = 0.18 ± 0.040 pmol (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 0.31 ± 0.082  
253 pmol, 48 hpf = 0.54 ± 0.11 pmol, 72 hpf = 0.50 ± 0.070 pmol, 96 hpf = 0.73 ± 0.057  
254 pmol). No significant change was seen when comparing treatment start at 6 vs. 24 hpf  
255 (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.2794), 24 vs. 72 hpf (p = 0.0742), 48 vs. 72 hpf (p = 0.9649), or  
256 48 vs. 96 hpf (p = 0.0683), but all other comparisons were significantly increased in  
257 older versus younger embryos (Table S3). [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA percent uptake increased 7.5-fold  
258 when starting treatment at 96 hpf vs. 6 hpf (Fig. 2C, Table S3; 6 hpf treatment = 0.037 ±  
259 0.006 pmol (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 0.053 ± 0.006 pmol, 48 hpf = 0.18 ± 0.010 pmol, 72  
260 hpf = 0.19 ± 0.012 pmol, 96 hpf = 0.277 ± 0.031 pmol). Uptake was significantly  
261 increased when treating older versus younger embryos for every developmental stage  
262 (Table S3) except when comparing 6 vs. 24 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.6975) and 48  
263 vs. 72 hpf embryos (p = 0.9833).

264

265 When increasing exposure duration to 24 hours, [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 mean pmol uptake of  
266 beginning exposure at 96 hpf was 3.6-fold higher than beginning at 6 hpf, consistent  
267 with 1 hour exposure. In contrast, pmol absorption plateaued following exposure  
268 beginning at 72 hpf or older (Fig. 2B, Table S4; 6 hpf treatment = 0.19 ± 0.008 pmol  
269 (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 0.22 ± 0.011 pmol, 48 hpf = 0.36 ± 0.062 pmol, 72 hpf = 0.66 ±  
270 0.077 pmol, 96 hpf = 0.68 ± 0.040 pmol). There was a significantly higher uptake in  
271 older versus younger embryos at each developmental stage (Table S4) except when  
272 comparing exposures beginning at 6 vs. 24 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.9118) and 72  
273 vs. 96 hpf (p = 0.9857).

274

275 There was a relatively smaller increase in [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA pmol uptake with developmental  
276 stage compared to 1 hour exposure, with a 3.8-fold increase when exposure began at  
277 96 hpf compared to 6 hpf. This increase plateaued when exposure began at 48 hpf and  
278 older (Fig. 2D, Table S4; 6 hpf treatment = 0.10 ± 0.014 pmol (mean ± SD), 24 hpf =  
279 0.17 ± 0.006 pmol, 48 hpf = 0.40 ± 0.070 pmol, 72 hpf = 0.53 ± 0.025 pmol, 96 hpf =  
280 0.38 ± 0.091 pmol). There was a significantly higher uptake when comparing exposure  
281 starting at 48 vs. 96 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.0448). For each other comparison,  
282 there was a significantly higher uptake when starting exposure in older versus younger  
283 embryos (Table S4) except when comparing 6 vs. 24 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p =  
284 0.5497), 48 vs. 72 hpf (p = 0.0688), and 48 vs. 96 hpf (p = 0.9985), which had no  
285 significant change.

286

287 Percent uptake following 24 hour exposure was similarly increased with increasing  
288 developmental stage for both compounds. Mean percent [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 uptake was increased  
289 by 3.9-fold when starting treatment in 96 hpf versus 6 hpf embryos with a plateau ≥ 72  
290 hpf (Fig. 2B, Table S4; 6 hpf treatment = 1.49 ± 0.051% (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 1.65 ±  
291 0.096%, 48 hpf = 2.88 ± 0.4%, 72 hpf = 5.82 ± 0.75%, 96 hpf = 5.81 ± 0.44%).  
292 Comparisons between exposure start at older and younger developmental stages  
293 showed significantly higher uptake when starting exposure at older stages (Table S4)  
294 except when comparing 6 vs. 24 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.9897) and 72 vs. 96 hpf (p  
295 > 0.9999). [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA percent uptake increased 5.1-fold in 96 hpf versus 6 hpf embryos  
296 with a plateau in uptake ≥ 48-72 hpf (Fig. 2D, Table S4; 6 hpf treatment = 0.53 ±  
297 0.081% (mean ± SD), 24 hpf = 0.94 ± 0.10%, 48 hpf = 2.04 ± 0.080%, 72 hpf = 3.38 ±  
298 0.21%, 96 hpf = 2.70 ± 0.75%). Uptake was significantly increased when starting  
299 treatment in older versus younger embryos (Table S4) except when comparing 6 vs. 24  
300 hpf (one-way ANOVA, p = 0.6223), 48 vs. 96 hpf (0.2288), and 72 vs. 96 hpf (p =  
301 0.2076).

302

### 303 **EE2 and E2 uptake exceed BPA uptake at multiple developmental stages**

304 We next compared [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA uptake at each developmental stage to [<sup>3</sup>H]E2  
305 uptake previously reported (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). Percent uptake was used for all  
306 comparisons, as [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA required a higher exposure dose (10 nM) than [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and  
307 [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 (5 nM) for absorption above the limit of detection. Statistical significance was  
308 determined by comparing the mean log-value of the fold-change for three independent  
309 experiments to zero.

310

311 When comparing percent [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2 uptake following 1 hour exposure, there was a  
312 modest increase relative to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 at embryos 6-48 hpf (Fig. 3C, Table S5; fold-change  
313 at 6 hpf =  $1.72 \pm 0.39$  (mean  $\pm$  SD), 24 hpf =  $1.27 \pm 0.33$ , 48 hpf =  $1.41 \pm 0.30$ , 72 hpf =  
314  $0.84 \pm 0.12$ , 96 hpf =  $0.81 \pm 0.067$ ), but no developmental stage had a statistically  
315 significant change (Table S5). When comparing [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA uptake to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 uptake, there  
316 was a statistically significant decrease in uptake at each developmental stage (Fig. 3C,  
317 Table S5; one-way ANOVA; fold-change at 6 hpf =  $0.36 \pm 0.056$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ; 24 hpf =  
318  $0.22 \pm 0.023$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ; 48 hpf =  $0.47 \pm 0.030$ ,  $p = 0.0005$ ; 72 hpf =  $0.31 \pm 0.023$ ,  $p =$   
319  $0.0001$ ; 96 hpf =  $0.31 \pm 0.031$ ,  $p = 0.0001$ ).

320

321 With 24 hour exposure, we observed a statistically significant increase in [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2  
322 percent uptake relative to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 uptake in the 6 hpf group (one-way ANOVA,  $p =$   
323  $0.0022$ ), while older embryos demonstrated percent uptake similar to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 (Fig. 3D,  
324 Table S5; fold-change at 6 hpf =  $1.79 \pm 0.062$ , 24 hpf =  $0.89 \pm 0.050$ , 48 hpf =  $0.75 \pm$   
325  $0.11$ , 72 hpf =  $0.79 \pm 0.10$ , 96 hpf =  $1.06 \pm 0.081$ ). Results with 24 hour exposure with  
326 [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA were consistent with the 1 hour exposure time, with an approximately 2-fold  
327 decrease in uptake at each developmental stage, though the decrease at 6 hpf was not  
328 statistically significant (Fig. 3D, Table S5; one-way ANOVA; fold-change at 6 hpf =  $0.63$   
329  $\pm 0.097$ ,  $p = 0.099$ ; 24 hpf =  $0.51 \pm 0.051$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ; 48 hpf =  $0.53 \pm 0.021$ ,  $p = 0.023$ ;  
330 72 hpf =  $0.46 \pm 0.025$ ,  $p = 0.0059$ ; 96 hpf =  $0.50 \pm 0.14$ ,  $p = 0.0097$ ). Therefore, we  
331 conclude that [ $^3\text{H}$ ]EE2 uptake was similar to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 uptake, while [ $^3\text{H}$ ]BPA uptake was  
332 reduced compared to [ $^3\text{H}$ ]E2 uptake.

333

334

### 335 **Inhibition of zebrafish P-gp orthologue Abcb4 does not affect EED uptake**

336 To test the idea that EEDs and their metabolites are transported by ABC transporters *in*

337 *vivo*, we used our uptake assay as a proxy to measure efflux of [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA.

338 We first asked whether treating embryos with a non-specific ABC transporter inhibitor

339 known to inhibit Abcb4 (Fischer et al., 2013), CsA, would increase radioactivity of

340 treated embryos following exposure via decreased efflux. Prior to experiments with

341 [<sup>3</sup>H]E2, we confirmed that CsA could block efflux of a fluorescent substrate of Abcb4,

342 rhodamine B (RhB), in 96 hpf embryos following 24 hour treatment. We found an

343 increase in fluorescence with CsA and RhB co-treated embryos versus RhB-only

344 treated embryos, confirming the efficacy of CsA at this developmental stage (Fig. 3B,

345 one-way ANOVA; RhB = 1504 ± 40.44 units, RhB + CsA = 2445 ± 65.8 units, p =

346 0.0002) and consistent with previously published results in zebrafish (Fischer et al.,

347 2013). We next tested whether the presence of E2 affected CsA activity by co-treating

348 embryos with CsA, RhB, and non-radioactive E2. We did not observe a change in

349 fluorescence when adding E2 at the same exposure concentration used for [<sup>3</sup>H] uptake

350 studies (Fig. 4A, one-way ANOVA; RhB + E2 = 1586 ± 92.05 units, p = 0.7814 vs. RhB;

351 RhB + CsA + E2 = 2488 ± 123.5, p = 0.9571 vs. RhB + CsA).

352

353 To then test whether CsA inhibited [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 efflux, resulting in increased embryo

354 radioactivity, we co-exposed embryos to CsA and [<sup>3</sup>H]E2. With 24 hour exposure at 96

355 hpf, pmol uptake was significantly decreased in CsA-treated embryos (Fig. 4B;



356 Unpaired Student's t-test; vehicle =  $0.6336 \pm 0.08162$  pmol (mean  $\pm$  SD), CsA =  $0.4978$   
357  $\pm 0.1034$  pmol,  $p = 0.0374$ ). Similarly, percent uptake was significantly decreased in  
358 CsA-treated embryos (Fig. 4B; Unpaired Student's t-test; vehicle =  $5.72 \pm 1.251\%$   
359 (mean  $\pm$  SD), CsA =  $3.534 \pm 0.7851\%$ ,  $p = 0.0082$ ). This suggests that CsA does not  
360 affect E2 transport, or that CsA modestly inhibits E2 uptake, resulting in reduced  
361 radioactivity.

362  
363 We also tested the ability of CsA to block the efflux of BPA, a non-steroidal EED.  
364 Following 24 hour [ $^3$ H]BPA exposure at 96 hpf, pmol BPA uptake was not significantly  
365 different in CsA-treated embryos compared to vehicle-treated embryos (Fig. 4C;  
366 Unpaired Student's t-test; vehicle =  $0.3909 \pm 0.02145$  pmol (mean  $\pm$  SD), CsA =  $0.2797$   
367  $\pm 0.04725$  pmol,  $p = 0.06$ ). Percent uptake was also not significantly different in CsA-  
368 treated embryos (Fig. 4C; Unpaired Student's t-test; vehicle =  $2.405 \pm 0.2333\%$  (mean  
369  $\pm$  SD), CsA =  $1.773 \pm 0.3927\%$ ,  $p = 0.14$ ). This suggests that CsA does not affect BPA  
370 transport.

371  
372 Concurrently, we treated zebrafish embryos with [ $^3$ H]E2 and the POP 2,2',4,4',6-  
373 pentabromodiphenyl ether (PBDE-100), with the hypothesis that PBDE-100 would  
374 inhibit [ $^3$ H]E2-conjugate efflux via P-gp or other ABC transporters, resulting in increased  
375 embryo radioactivity following exposure to E2 and PDBE-100 compared to E2 alone.  
376 Consistent with our CsA results, we found that there was no significant change in pmol  
377 uptake compared to vehicle at three concentrations of PBDE-100 (20 nM, 50 nM, 200  
378 nM) (Fig. 4D; vehicle =  $0.8604 \pm 0.124$  pmol (mean  $\pm$  SD), 20 nM PBDE-100 =  $0.7393 \pm$

379 0.05661 pmol, 50 nM PBDE-100 =  $0.7677 \pm 0.08959$  pmol, 200 nM PBDE-100 = 0.7706  
380  $\pm 0.1999$  pmol). This suggests that co-exposure to PBDE-100 does not affect E2  
381 transport.

382

## 383 **DISCUSSION**

### 384 **Comparing uptake of estrogen-like EEDs**

385 When comparing the uptake of different estrogen-like EEDs, we expected structurally  
386 similar EEDs like E2 and EE2 to have similar uptake. Since BPA is a non-steroidal  
387 estrogen and structurally distinct from E2, we expected relatively lower uptake with this  
388 compound. Our results were consistent with these hypotheses, as EE2 and E2 uptake  
389 were generally similar, while BPA uptake was lower than either EE2 or E2 uptake.

390

391 EE2 is a known environmental contaminant that may have adverse effects on aquatic  
392 wildlife, particularly during development (Bhandari et al., 2015; Santos et al., 2014;  
393 Volkova et al., 2015). Its structural similarity to E2, the primary circulating estrogen in  
394 humans, in conjunction with its high affinity for estrogen receptor alpha (ER $\alpha$ ) (Pinto et  
395 al., 2014), makes EE2 relevant for toxicity assays in aquatic animals as well as animal  
396 models of human toxicity and teratogenicity. As a steroidal estrogen, EE2 is assumed to  
397 diffuse through cell membranes and be absorbed by lipophilic tissues, such as the  
398 embryonic yolk. We previously reported that, in embryos younger than 72 hpf,  
399 approximately 40-60% of exogenous E2 is absorbed by the yolk (Souder and Gorelick,  
400 2017). We also found that the presence of the chorion did not significantly affect E2  
401 uptake (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). We expect these results to hold true for EE2. For

402 example, if 24 hpf embryos are exposed to E2 for 24 hours, we estimate that half the E2  
403 that is taken up by the embryo will be deposited in the yolk. Extrapolating these results  
404 to EE2, which exhibited 1.6% uptake into the entire embryo, we predict that 0.8% of  
405 exogenous EE2 will be deposited in the yolk. This suggests that higher concentrations  
406 of EE2 are required earlier in development when the yolk comprises a larger proportion  
407 of the embryo. Acute treatments at these stages may also have longer term effects  
408 since EE2 absorbed into the yolk is available to diffuse into the embryo as it develops.  
409 The similar uptake results obtained with E2 and EE2 support the hypothesis that  
410 steroidal estrogens are absorbed equivalently by zebrafish embryos. Consequently, we  
411 speculate that the E2 and EE2 uptake properties are broadly applicable to any steroidal  
412 EED. Uptake of specific compounds can be confirmed using our isotopic assay. Finally,  
413 the similarity in E2 uptake, as an endogenous estrogen, and EE2 uptake, as a synthetic  
414 estrogen, suggests that endogenous estradiol levels do not limit E2 uptake at the levels  
415 present in zebrafish embryos and larvae. This suggests there are low levels of E2  
416 present in the embryo, insufficient to affect passive diffusion gradients, or that there is  
417 some transport mechanism that is able to augment E2 uptake in embryos.

418

419 Comparing BPA uptake to E2 uptake can further inform future studies using non-  
420 steroidal EEDs. While research testing the effects of BPA on development are  
421 abundant, many of these studies use environmentally-relevant low nanomolar  
422 concentrations of BPA in treatment water (Kinch et al., 2015; Kinch et al., 2016; Saili et  
423 al., 2012; Wu et al., 2017). Based on our results, the amount of BPA available to the  
424 embryo is substantially less than the reported  $EC_{50}$  of BPA for the zebrafish estrogen

425 receptors ER $\alpha$ , 599 nM, ER $\beta$ 1, 18.9  $\mu$ M, and ER $\beta$ 2, 3.8  $\mu$ M (Pinto et al., 2014). For  
426 example, in 2015, Kinch and colleagues reported altered neurogenesis in embryos  
427 exposed to 6.8 nM BPA from 0-5 dpf. Based on our analysis of 10 nM exposure from  
428 96-120 hpf, this corresponds to a concentration of 0.18 nM (2.7% uptake), well below  
429 the above listed EC<sub>50</sub> values. Kinch and colleagues further reported that E2 treatment  
430 did not reproduce the effects of BPA, and that an androgen receptor antagonist,  
431 flutamide, was able to block the effects of BPA. This suggests that BPA may act via  
432 receptors other than estrogen receptors to elicit observed phenotypes. Another  
433 explanation for BPA effects at nanomolar concentrations is that BPA prevents the  
434 binding of endogenous estrogens to their receptors. As the EC<sub>50</sub> of endogenous  
435 estrogens like E2 are hundreds- to thousands-fold greater than BPA (Pinto et al., 2014),  
436 however, it is unlikely that BPA displaces these estrogens at exposure concentrations  
437 below its EC<sub>50</sub>. Therefore, effects on aquatic model systems, like zebrafish, following  
438 exposure to low nanomolar concentrations of BPA may be due to non-estrogenic effects  
439 of BPA.

440  
441 Overall, these results provide important reference information for exposing zebrafish  
442 embryos and larvae to environmentally relevant estrogen-like chemicals. Since percent  
443 uptake remains constant with increasing exposure concentration for the three EEDs  
444 described here, the percent uptake for the exposure conditions we tested can be used  
445 to estimate the concentration of a compound required in the water to achieve a specific  
446 concentration *in vivo*. Additionally, less severe phenotypes observed following exposure  
447 to BPA versus E2 may be due to decreased chemical availability rather than decreased

448 efficacy. Therefore, comparisons of the effects of such compounds may require  
449 determination of *in vivo* levels.

450

#### 451 **Comparison to uptake studies in other fish species**

452 One study used [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 and [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA to quantify uptake into fertilized medaka (*Oryzias*  
453 *latipes*) eggs (Bhandari et al., 2015). For [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2, they observed an uptake of 4.05  
454 fmol/mg/egg following 24 hour 0.17 nM exposure. Assuming each egg is approximately  
455 1 mg, this value is nearly 50-fold lower than the uptake we observed in 6 hpf embryos  
456 following 24 hour 5 nM exposure, though this discrepancy could be attributed to the 30-  
457 fold lower concentration used in their study. They observed [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA uptake of 0.125  
458 pmol/mg/egg following 24 hour 44 nM exposure, which is comparable to the 0.1005  
459 pmol we observed following 24 hour 10 nM exposure.

460

#### 461 **Comparison to uptake studies using chromatography and mass spectrometry**

462 In one study using high-performance liquid chromatography coupled to mass  
463 spectrometry (HPLC-MS) to measure BPA uptake into zebrafish embryos, there was a  
464 0.02 µg/kg uptake observed following 1 nM exposure from 8-58 hpf (Saili et al., 2012).  
465 Assuming a mass of 0.291 mg per embryo (Kantae et al., 2016), this corresponds to  
466 approximately 0.025 fmol BPA per embryo. The most relevant comparison to the Saili  
467 exposure conditions that we tested is a 10 nM exposure from 24-48 hpf. We observed  
468 an uptake of 0.168 pmol, which could be estimated as 0.0168 pmol with 1 nM exposure  
469 (an exposure concentration that was below our limit of detection). Two differences  
470 between our study and the Saili study are the standard curve and the pooling of

471 embryos. First, Saili and colleagues extrapolated uptake with 1 nM exposure from a  
472 standard curve produced using much higher exposure concentrations of BPA (1-100  
473  $\mu\text{M}$ ). Our assay provides a means of measurement that is more sensitive, with  
474 detectable levels of BPA following exposure to 5 nM concentration, rather than 1  $\mu\text{M}$ .  
475 Second, Saili and colleagues used pools of 50 embryos to quantify uptake at each  
476 exposure concentration. Our assay is able to measure single embryos, which is more  
477 useful for screening compounds that affect BPA uptake.

478

479 Wu and colleagues also used HPLC-MS to measure BPA uptake in zebrafish embryos  
480 from 4-72 hpf with multiple exposure concentrations (Wu et al., 2017). Comparing their  
481 1  $\mu\text{g/L}$  exposure (4.38 nM) to our 5 nM treatment from 48-72 hpf yields similar results,  
482 with 0.196 pmol/embryo via HPLC, and 0.190 pmol/embryo via our isotopic assay. This  
483 provides validity for the accuracy of our assay, despite its simplicity compared to the  
484 sophisticated instruments required for HPLC-MS analysis.

485

#### 486 **Effect of ABC transporter inhibition on EED uptake and toxicity**

487 The isotopic uptake assay can test the effect of environmental chemicals on EED  
488 uptake. Persistent organic pollutants (POPs) can inhibit ABC transporters, which may  
489 contribute to POP toxicity in aquatic animals by preventing efflux of small molecules,  
490 such as EEDs, that are normally effluxed by ABC transporters (Nicklisch et al., 2016).  
491 Estradiol is assumed to freely diffuse through cell membranes, but its less lipophilic  
492 conjugates, such as 17- $\beta$ -*d*-E2-glucuronide, are transported by ABC transporters like P-  
493 gp (Huang et al., 1998). The zebrafish paralogue of P-gp, encoded by the *abcb4* gene,

494 transports known substrates of human P-gp, including cyclosporin A (CsA), vinblastine,  
495 and rhodamine B (RhB)(Fischer et al., 2013). Abcb4 is expressed ubiquitously early in  
496 zebrafish development, and becomes localized to the gut by 120 hpf (Fischer et al.,  
497 2013). Further, the enzymes that metabolize E2—such as UDP-  
498 glucuronosyltransferases—are expressed early in development in zebrafish (Christen  
499 and Fent, 2014), therefore E2 is likely metabolized in zebrafish embryos and could be  
500 effluxed by Abcb4. We found, however, that co-treatment with the P-gp inhibitor CsA  
501 modestly decreased [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 uptake, and that PBDE-100 had no effect on uptake. One  
502 possible explanation for the decrease in uptake observed with CsA treatment is that the  
503 transporters blocked by CsA are normally involved in augmenting [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 uptake, rather  
504 than controlling its efflux. Additionally, the decrease in percent uptake with CsA co-  
505 treatment is relatively low (2.2%), and may not be biologically relevant. When adjusting  
506 water concentration to account for the small percentage absorbed by the embryos,  
507 there is an effective concentration of 286 pM without CsA, and 176 pM with CsA  
508 treatment. Both of these values exceed the EC<sub>50</sub> of E2 for ER $\alpha$  (77 pM), ER $\beta$ 1 (39 pM),  
509 and ER $\beta$ 2 (118 pM)(Pinto et al., 2014).

510

511 We performed the same experiment using [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA, to test the effect of CsA-mediated  
512 ABC transporter inhibition on a non-steroidal EED. It has been suggested by *in vitro*  
513 assays that BPA transport by ABC transporters occurs in a species-specific manner  
514 (Mazur et al., 2012). It is not well-understood how BPA is normally transported in  
515 developing zebrafish embryos. Our results suggest that BPA is not effluxed by CsA-  
516 responsive transporters in zebrafish embryos 96-120 hpf.

517

518 It is possible that the concentrations of E2 and BPA we used in our experiments are  
519 below the concentrations required to stimulate Abcb4 activity. Future studies could treat  
520 embryos with a mixture of non-radioactive and radioactive compounds to increase  
521 exposure concentrations, and determine if higher concentrations are able to inhibit  
522 Abcb4 or other ABC transporters. Further, the promiscuity of CsA for ABC transporters  
523 may cause inhibition of transporters with opposing directionality in cellular membranes,  
524 facilitating efflux versus influx. To identify the role of specific transporters involved in E2  
525 or BPA transport, embryos could be treated with isoform-specific antagonists of the  
526 ABC transporters. This could also be accomplished with the generation of mutant  
527 zebrafish lines with non-functional transporters.

528

## 529 **Conclusions and future directions**

530 The results presented here confirm the utility of the tritium-based isotopic uptake assay  
531 for sensitive measurement of structurally-diverse EEDs *in vivo*. In contrast to HPLC and  
532 mass spectrometry approaches, the isotopic uptake assay requires only a scintillation  
533 counter, an instrument to which many labs have access and which requires little  
534 specialized training to operate. Additionally, the isotopic assay does not require any  
535 chemical extraction procedures. We also present this assay as a screening tool for  
536 identification of chemicals that affect EED transport. Future studies could expand upon  
537 these results to test the uptake of non-estrogenic EEDs and other steroid hormones,  
538 like androgens and progesterone, and identify proteins involved in compound transport  
539 via pharmacologic or genetic manipulation. Our results provide important information



540 regarding the comparison of toxicity between structurally-distinct EEDs and will inform  
541 future studies using these compounds to investigate mechanisms of EED toxicity.

542

#### 543 **SUPPLEMENTARY DATA**

544 Supplementary figure S1 and tables S1-S6 supplied below Figures.

545

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549

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554

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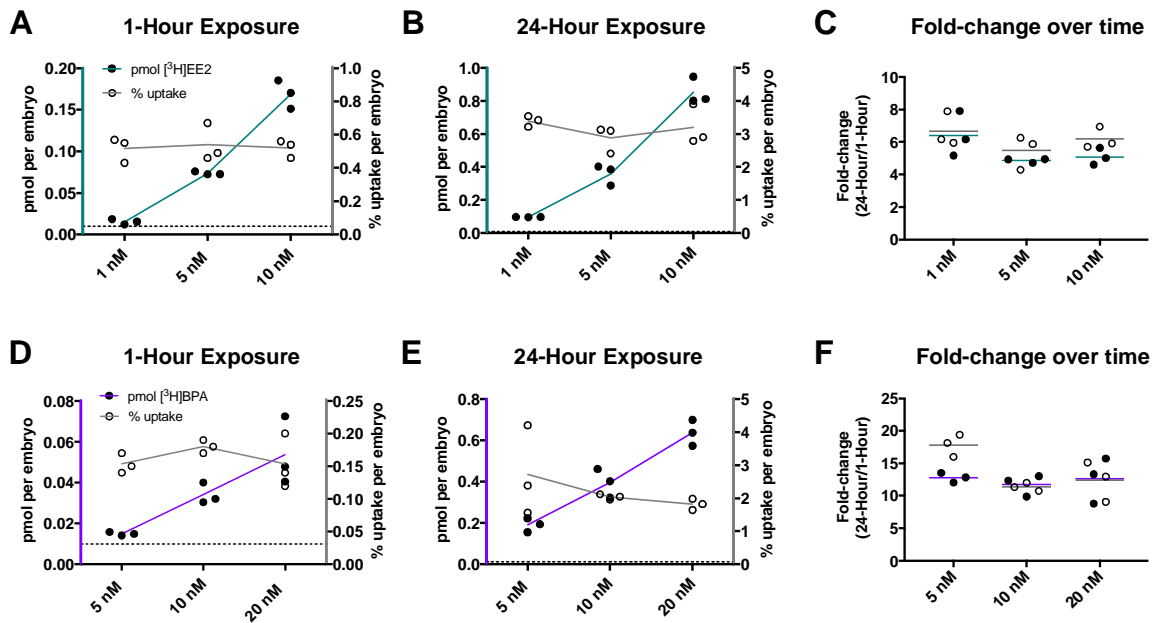
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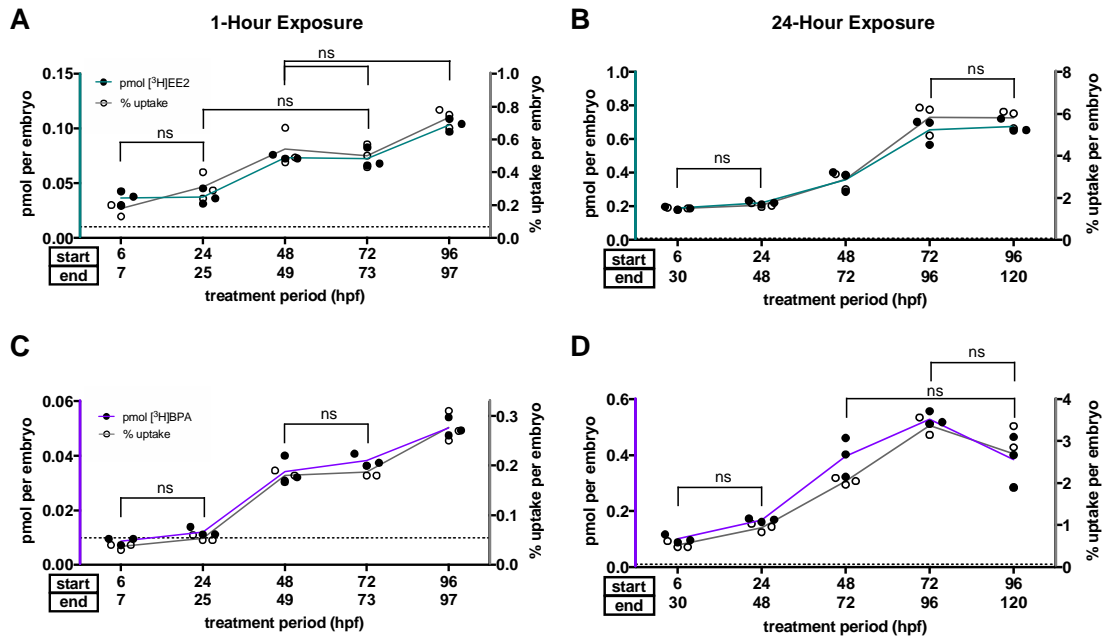
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663 **FIGURES**  
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666  
667 **Figure 1. EE2 uptake is greater than BPA at multiple exposure concentrations and**  
668  **durations. (A-F)** Embryos at 48 hours post fertilization were exposed to three different  
669 concentrations of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 (A-C) or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA (D-F) for one hour (A,D) or 24 hours (B,E).  
670 Radioactivity was measured using a scintillation counter and used to calculate pmol per  
671 embryo (black circles) and percent uptake per embryo (white circles). For each  
672 compound, pmol uptake increased in a dose-dependent manner (teal or purple lines  
673 connecting black circles), whereas percent [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 uptake remained constant (grey lines  
674 connecting white circles). Each circle represents the mean uptake from a single  
675 experiment (n=3) assaying 10 embryos per experiment. Horizontal dotted line  
676 represents the limit of detection (0.01 pmol). (C) Both pmol and percent [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 uptake  
677 increased approximately 6-fold following 24-hour exposure compared to 1-hour  
678 exposure. Horizontal lines represent the mean fold change in pmol (teal) or percent  
679 uptake (grey). (F) Both pmol and percent [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA uptake increased approximately 13-  
680 fold following 24-hour exposure compared to 1-hour exposure. Horizontal lines  
681 represent the mean fold change in pmol (purple) or percent uptake (grey).



682

683 **Figure 2. EE2 and BPA uptake depend on developmental stage in zebrafish. (A, B)**  
684 Embryos and larvae were exposed to 5 nM  $[^3\text{H}]$ EE2 (A,B) or 10 nM  $[^3\text{H}]$ BPA (C,D) for  
685 one hour (A,C) or 24 hours (B,D) starting at five different developmental stages  
686 between 6 and 96 hours post fertilization (hpf). Radioactivity was measured using a  
687 scintillation counter and used to calculate pmol per embryo (black circles) and percent  
688 uptake per embryo (white circles). Each circle represents the mean uptake from a single  
689 experiment (n=3-5) assaying 10 embryos per experiment. Horizontal dotted line  
690 represents the limit of detection (0.01 pmol). Lines connect the mean for each group.  
691 Brackets denote percent uptake comparisons that are *not* statistically significant (ns), all  
692 other comparisons are significant (one-way ANOVA,  $p < 0.05$ ).

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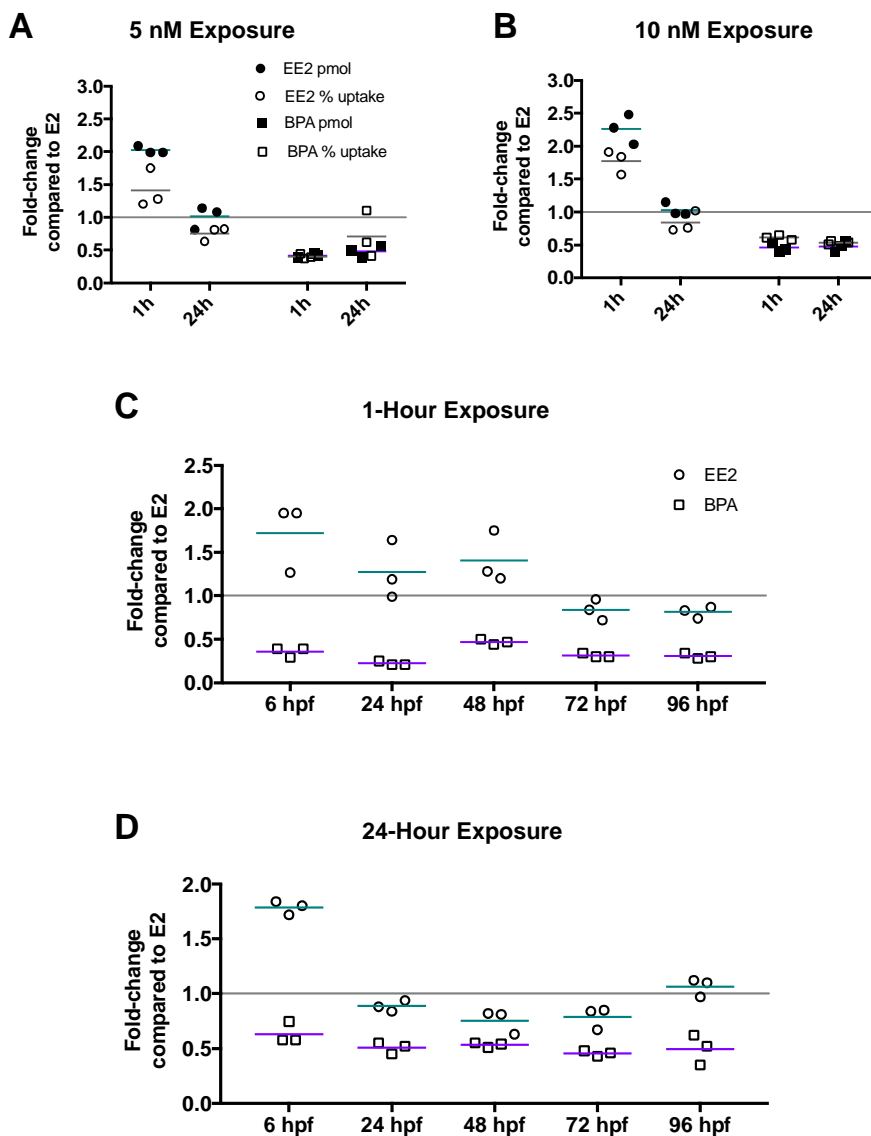
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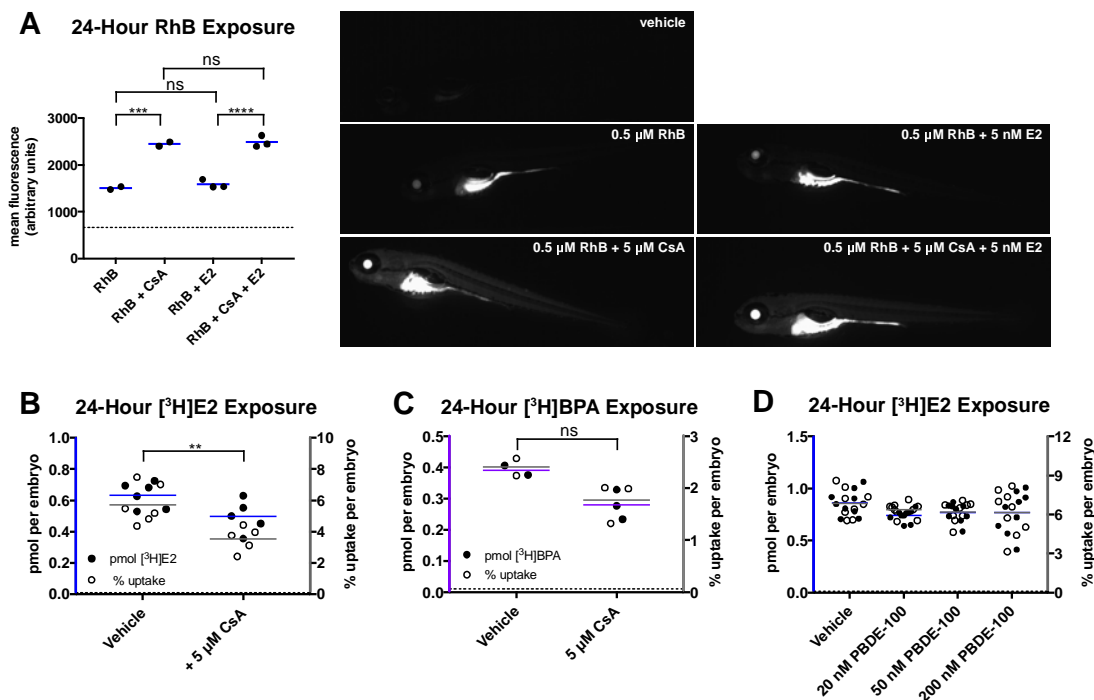
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704 **Figure 3. BPA uptake is less than E2 and EE2 uptake. (A,B)** EE2 and BPA uptake  
705 compared to E2 uptake in 48 hours post fertilization (hpf) embryos exposed to 5 nM (A)  
706 or 10 nM (B) of each compound for 1 or 24 hours. (C,D) EE2 and BPA percent uptake  
707 compared to E2 in 6-96 hpf zebrafish exposed to 5 nM [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 or 10 nM  
708 [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA for one hour (C) or 24 hours (D). Fold-change compared to E2 was calculated  
709 by dividing the average pmol or percent uptake of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA (n=3  
710 experiments, 10 embryos per experiment) by the pmol or percent uptake of [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 at  
711 each exposure condition. Horizontal lines represent the mean fold change in pmol  
712 (teal/purple) or percent uptake (gray). Horizontal gray line at y=1 represents no change  
713 in uptake compared to E2. [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 data from Souder and Gorelick, 2017.  
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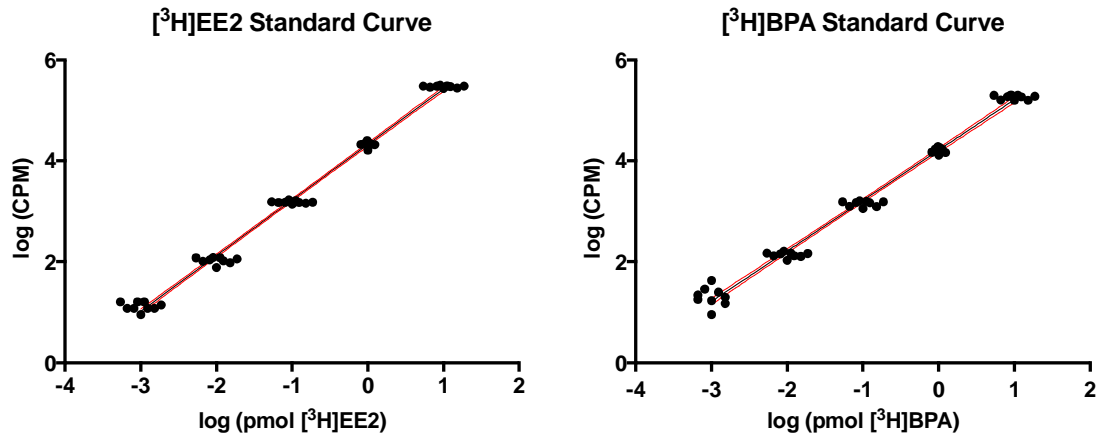


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717 **Figure 4. E2 uptake is not affected by ABC transporter inhibition.** (A) Embryos were exposed at 96  
718 hpf to vehicle or 0.5 μM rhodamine B (RhB) with or without 5 μM cyclosporin A (CsA) and non-radioactive  
719 5 nM E2 for 24 hours in the dark. Embryos were imaged following treatment and mean integrated density  
720 of fluorescence for whole embryos was measured (mean fluorescence). Each circle on the graph  
721 represents the mean fluorescence from a single experiment (n=2-3 experiments, 10 embryos per  
722 experiment), horizontal blue line represents the mean. Horizontal dotted line at y=666 represents mean  
723 fluorescence of vehicle-treated embryos (n=10 embryos). Representative fluorescence images for each  
724 group are shown to the right of the graph. CsA treatment reduced RhB efflux, indicated by significantly  
725 increased RhB fluorescence. E2 exposure had no significant affect on CsA-dependent RhB efflux (one-  
726 way ANOVA, ns=not significant, \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001). Fluorescence of each group was significantly  
727 increased compared to vehicle (p<0.05). (B) Embryos at 96 hpf were exposed to 5 nM [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 with or  
728 without 5 μM CsA for 24 hours. Radioactivity was measured using a scintillation counter and used to  
729 calculate pmol per embryo (black circles) and percent uptake per embryo (white circles). Horizontal blue  
730 lines represent mean pmol uptake, gray lines represent mean percent uptake, n= 5-6 experiments, 10  
731 embryos per experiment. CsA failed to increase uptake of [<sup>3</sup>H]E2. Instead, percent and pmol uptake were  
732 slightly decreased with the addition of CsA (unpaired Student's t-test, \*\*p<0.01 percent uptake, p<0.05  
733 pmol uptake, CsA + E2 vs vehicle + E2). (C) Embryos at 96 hpf were exposed to 10 nM [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA with or  
734 without 5 μM CsA for 24 hours. Radioactivity was measured using a scintillation counter and used to  
735 calculate pmol per embryo (black circles) and percent uptake per embryo (white circles). Horizontal purple  
736 lines represent mean pmol uptake, gray lines represent mean percent uptake, n=2-3 experiments, 10  
737 embryos per experiment. Percent [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA uptake was not significantly changed with the addition of CsA  
738 (unpaired Student's t-test, ns not significant, p≥0.05). (D) Embryos at 72 hpf were exposed to 5 nM [<sup>3</sup>H]E2  
739 together with vehicle or with PBDE-100 (20 - 200 nM). Radioactivity was measured using a scintillation  
740 counter and used to calculate pmol per embryo (black circles) and percent uptake per embryo (white  
741 circles). Each circle represents a single embryo, n=10 embryos per treatment. Horizontal blue lines  
742 represent mean pmol uptake, gray lines represent mean percent uptake. No significant change was found  
743 between groups (one-way ANOVA, p≥0.05). B-D, Horizontal dotted line represents the limit of detection  
744 (0.01 pmol).

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748 **SUPPLEMENTARY DATA**  
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750  
751 **Figure S1. Standard curve for uptake calculations. (A-B)** The radioactivity of 10  $\mu$ L  
752 of a known concentration of [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 **(A)** or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA **(B)** was measured on a scintillation  
753 counter in triplicate on three different days for a total of 9 measurements per dose  
754 (black circles). A linear relationship was found when performing a power analysis of the  
755 mean of each concentration. **(A)**  $Y = 1.101 \cdot X + 4.326$  where  $X = \log(\text{pmol } [^3\text{H}]\text{EE2})$  and  
756  $Y = \log(\text{CPM})$ .  $r^2 = 0.9972$  (black line; unweighted, best-fit linear regression line). **(B)**  $Y$   
757  $= 0.998 \cdot X + 4.212$  where  $X = \log(\text{pmol } [^3\text{H}]\text{BPA})$  and  $Y = \log(\text{CPM})$ .  $r^2 = 0.9939$  (black  
758 line; unweighted, best-fit linear regression line). Outer red lines represent 95% CI.  
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1-Hour Exposure					
pmol [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (pmol)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (pmol)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.0364	0.0736	0.3060	0.0060	**
10	0.0746	0.1689	0.3533	0.0028	**
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.3833	0.5400	0.1431	0.7113	ns
10	0.2933	0.5200	0.2473	0.0071	**
pmol [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (pmol)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (pmol)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.0364	0.0149	-0.3842	0.0015	**
10	0.0746	0.0341	-0.3405	0.0035	**
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.3833	0.1533	-0.3991	0.0662	ns
10	0.2933	0.1800	-0.2128	0.0163	*

763

764 **Table S1.** Fold-change vs. E2 pmol and percent uptake following 1-hour exposure.  
765 Fold-change was calculated by dividing pmol [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA by published pmol  
766 absorption [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). Adjusted p-values were determined by  
767 one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's test for multiple comparisons to compare log values of  
768 the fold-change to zero. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, ns not significant (p≥0.05).  
769

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24-Hour Exposure					
pmol [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (pmol)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (pmol)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.3544	0.3582	-0.0004	0.9999	ns
10	0.8263	0.8538	0.0129	0.9989	ns
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	3.8200	2.8800	-0.1261	0.7844	ns
10	3.8067	3.1970	-0.0824	0.4378	ns
pmol [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (pmol)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (pmol)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	0.3544	0.1904	-0.2723	0.0114	*
10	0.8263	0.3953	-0.3235	0.0048	**
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Exposure Concentration (nM)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
5	3.8200	2.2717	-0.1845	0.5311	ns
10	3.8067	2.0430	-0.2706	0.0042	**

771

772 **Table S2.** Fold-change vs. E2 pmol and percent uptake following 24-hour exposure.  
 773 Fold-change was calculated by dividing pmol [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA by published pmol  
 774 absorption [<sup>3</sup>H]E2 (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). Adjusted p-values were determined by  
 775 one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's test for multiple comparisons to compare log values of  
 776 the fold-change to zero. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, ns not significant (p≥0.05).

1-Hour Exposure						
pmol [3H]EE2						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.0365	24	0.0376	0.0011	0.9996	ns
		48	0.0736	0.0371	0.0003	***
		72	0.0723	0.0358	0.0004	***
		96	0.1033	0.0668	<0.0001	****
24	0.0376	48	0.0736	0.0360	0.0004	***
		72	0.0723	0.0347	0.0005	***
		96	0.1033	0.0657	<0.0001	****
48	0.0736	72	0.0723	-0.0013	0.9989	ns
		96	0.1033	0.0297	0.0018	**
72	0.0723	96	0.1033	0.0310	0.0013	**
% uptake [3H]EE2						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.1767	24	0.3100	0.1333	0.2794	ns
		48	0.5400	0.3633	0.0012	**
		72	0.5000	0.3233	0.0030	**
		96	0.7333	0.5567	<0.0001	****
24	0.3100	48	0.5400	0.2300	0.0275	*
		72	0.5000	0.1900	0.0742	ns
		96	0.7333	0.4233	0.0004	***
48	0.5400	72	0.5000	-0.0400	0.9649	ns
		96	0.7333	0.1933	0.0683	ns
72	0.5000	96	0.7333	0.2333	0.0254	*
pmol [3H]BPA						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.0087	24	0.0121	0.0034	0.6854	ns
		48	0.0341	0.0254	<0.0001	****
		72	0.0381	0.0294	<0.0001	****
		96	0.0502	0.0415	<0.0001	****
24	0.0121	48	0.0341	0.0220	<0.0001	****
		72	0.0381	0.0260	<0.0001	****
		96	0.0502	0.0381	<0.0001	****
48	0.0341	72	0.0381	0.0040	0.5343	ns
		96	0.0502	0.0161	0.0006	***
72	0.0381	96	0.0502	0.0121	0.0050	**
% uptake [3H]BPA						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.0367	24	0.0533	0.0167	0.6975	ns
		48	0.1800	0.1433	<0.0001	****
		72	0.1867	0.1500	<0.0001	****
		96	0.2767	0.2400	<0.0001	****
24	0.0533	48	0.1800	0.1267	<0.0001	****
		72	0.1867	0.1333	<0.0001	****
		96	0.2767	0.2233	<0.0001	****
48	0.1800	72	0.1867	0.0067	0.9833	ns
		96	0.2767	0.0967	0.0001	***
72	0.1867	96	0.2767	0.0900	0.0003	***

777

778 **Table S3.** EE2 and BPA uptake with increasing developmental stage following 1-hour  
779 exposure. Mean 1 denotes the mean pmol or percent uptake of the developmental  
780 stage compared to (Start hpf). Mean 2 denotes the mean pmol or percent uptake of  
781 starting treatment at higher developmental stages (vs hpf). Adjusted p-values  
782 comparing the mean uptake at each developmental stage were determined via one-way  
783 ANOVA with Tukey's test for multiple comparisons. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001,  
784 \*\*\*\*p<0.0001, ns not significant (p≥0.05).

785

24-Hour Exposure						
pmol [3H]EE2						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.1891	24	0.2222	0.0331	0.9118	ns
		48	0.3582	0.1691	0.0107	*
		72	0.6562	0.4671	<0.0001	****
		96	0.6758	0.4867	<0.0001	****
24	0.2222	48	0.3582	0.1360	0.0388	*
		72	0.6562	0.4340	<0.0001	****
		96	0.6758	0.4536	<0.0001	****
48	0.3582	72	0.6562	0.2980	0.0001	***
		96	0.6758	0.3176	<0.0001	****
72	0.6562	96	0.6758	0.0196	0.9857	ns
% uptake [3H]EE2						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	1.4867	24	1.6467	0.1600	0.9897	ns
		48	2.8800	1.3933	0.0175	*
		72	5.8200	4.3333	<0.0001	****
		96	5.8100	4.3233	<0.0001	****
24	1.6467	48	2.8800	1.2333	0.0354	*
		72	5.8200	4.1733	<0.0001	****
		96	5.8100	4.1633	<0.0001	****
48	2.8800	72	5.8200	2.9400	<0.0001	****
		96	5.8100	2.9300	<0.0001	****
72	5.8200	96	5.8100	-0.0100	>0.9999	ns
pmol [3H]BPA						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.1005	24	0.1680	0.0675	0.5497	ns
		48	0.3953	0.2948	0.0003	***
		72	0.5285	0.4280	<0.0001	****
		96	0.3833	0.2828	0.0005	***
24	0.1680	48	0.3953	0.2273	0.0026	**
		72	0.5285	0.3605	<0.0001	****
		96	0.3833	0.2153	0.0039	**
48	0.3953	72	0.5285	0.1332	0.0688	ns
		96	0.3833	-0.0120	0.9985	ns
72	0.5285	96	0.3833	-0.1452	0.0448	*
% uptake [3H]BPA						
Start (hpf)	mean 1	vs (hpf)	mean 2	mean 2 - mean 1	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.5267	24	0.9400	0.4133	0.6223	ns
		48	2.0433	1.5166	0.0026	**
		72	3.3767	2.8500	<0.0001	****
		96	2.7000	2.1733	0.0001	***
24	0.9400	48	2.0433	1.1033	0.0218	*
		72	3.3767	2.4367	<0.0001	****
		96	2.7000	1.7600	0.0008	***
48	2.0433	72	3.3767	1.3334	0.0066	**
		96	2.7000	0.6567	0.2288	ns
72	3.3767	96	2.7000	-0.6767	0.2076	ns

786

787 **Table S4.** EE2 and BPA uptake with increasing developmental stage following 24-hour  
788 exposure. Mean 1 denotes the mean pmol or percent uptake of the developmental  
789 stage compared to (Start hpf). Mean 2 denotes the mean pmol or percent uptake of  
790 starting treatment at higher developmental stages (vs hpf). Adjusted p-values  
791 comparing mean uptake at each developmental stage were determined via one-way  
792 ANOVA with Tukey's test for multiple comparisons. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001,  
793 \*\*\*\*p<0.0001, ns not significant (p≥0.05).

794

795

1-Hour Exposure					
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Start (hpf)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.1025	0.1767	0.1032	0.1505	ns
24	0.2433	0.3100	-0.0044	0.7977	ns
48	0.3833	0.5400	0.2430	0.4978	ns
72	0.5967	0.5000	-0.1427	0.8867	ns
96	0.9000	0.7333	-0.1308	0.8243	ns
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Start (hpf)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.1025	0.0367	-0.5336	0.0001	****
24	0.2433	0.0533	-0.6778	0.0001	****
48	0.3833	0.1800	-0.3566	0.0005	***
72	0.5967	0.1867	-0.5229	0.0001	****
96	0.9000	0.2767	-0.4685	0.0001	****

796

797 **Table S5.** Fold-change vs E2 percent uptake with 1-hour exposure. Fold-change was  
798 calculated by dividing pmol [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA by published pmol absorption  
799 [<sup>3</sup>H]E2. (Souder and Gorelick, 2017) Adjusted p-values were determined by one-way  
800 ANOVA with Dunnett's test for multiple comparisons to compare log values of the fold-  
801 change to zero. \*\*\*p<0.001, \*\*\*\*p<0.0001, ns not significant (p≥0.05).  
802

803

24-Hour Exposure					
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2					
Start (hpf)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]EE2 (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.8320	1.4867	0.2352	0.0022	**
24	1.8625	1.6467	-0.0757	0.7479	ns
48	3.8200	2.8800	-0.0915	0.1101	ns
72	7.3800	5.8200	-0.0706	0.1992	ns
96	5.4600	5.8100	0.0492	0.9778	ns
% uptake [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA					
Start (hpf)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]E2 (%)	mean [ <sup>3</sup> H]BPA (%)	log(fold-change)	adjusted p-value	summary
6	0.8320	0.5267	-0.2388	0.0988	ns
24	1.8625	0.9400	-0.3468	0.0142	*
48	3.8200	2.0433	-0.2924	0.0229	*
72	7.3800	3.3767	-0.3188	0.0059	**
96	5.4600	2.7000	-0.2840	0.0097	**

804

805 **Table S6.** Fold-change vs E2 percent uptake with 24-hour exposure. Fold-change was  
 806 calculated by dividing pmol [<sup>3</sup>H]EE2 or [<sup>3</sup>H]BPA by published pmol absorption [<sup>3</sup>H]E2  
 807 (Souder and Gorelick, 2017). Adjusted p-values were determined by one-way ANOVA  
 808 with Dunnett's test for multiple comparisons to compare log values of the fold-change to  
 809 zero. \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, ns not significant (p≥0.05).