

Simple Strategies for Lowering Your Exposure to Environmental Toxins

Pesticides

- Eat organic produce whenever possible. Use the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce when selecting fruits and vegetables.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Buy organic fibers whenever possible. Conventional cotton is heavily sprayed with pesticides.
- Don't use anti-lice treatments with lindane, malathion or other pesticides.
- Don't allow your children to play in areas that have been recently sprayed with pesticides.
- Never spray or use pesticides in the house or on your lawn. Use mechanical means, such as fly paper and sticky traps, or low-toxicity chemicals such as boric acid, diatomaceous earth, fatty acid soaps, and horticultural oils

Water

- Drink filtered water instead of tap or bottled water.
- Use the Environmental Working Group's water filtration buying guide when choosing a water filter.
- If you choose to drink bottled water, spring water in a glass bottle is the best choice.
- Use non-toxic water containers. Either glass, BPA free plastic, or stainless steel bottles are good choices.
- Do not discard your medications in the toilet or down the sink. Some pharmacies allow you to return unused and expired medications.
- Do not use fluorinated water for drinking or making infant formula.
- Showering and bathing results in exposure to chlorine and chemical vapors. Use a shower filter with two components: copper/Zinc media to reduce chlorine and coconut shell carbon to reduce the amount of synthetic chemicals

Indoor Air Quality

- Open windows whenever possible to let fresh air in.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house to minimize transfer of pesticides and chemicals.
- Use a HEPA vacuum in your home.
- Consider purchasing a good quality air purifier, such as a HEPA air filtration system.
- Use a MERV 11, 12, or 13 rated filter on your air return system. Replace your filters at least every 2-3 months.

Simple Strategies for Lowering Your Exposure to Environmental Toxins

- Dust frequently.
- Check radon levels in the home if you live in an area that is known to have high levels.
- Don't use air fresheners with synthetic fragrances. Essential oils are a better choice.

Indoor Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

- If it has a strong chemical odor, consider other options before bringing into the house. If it is a necessary item, place it outside for a few days before bringing it into the house.
- Choose natural or 'organic' dry cleaning over conventional dry cleaning. Professional wet cleaning and CO₂ based dry cleaning are the best choices. Avoid perc, petroleum based, and silicone dry cleaning.
- Purchase floor models that have already emitted some VOCs.
- Buy solid wood furniture with natural fabrics. Avoid formaldehyde, toxic finishes, and glues.
- Perform home renovations with the windows open and when you can arrange to be away.
- Use no or low VOC paint.
- Keep the house at a low temperature and relative humidity to minimize VOCs.
- Use wood, stone tile, or natural fiber flooring in place of carpets.
- Buy non-toxic school and art supplies.

Cleaning Agents

- Read labels on cleaning agents as you would food labels.
- Use only natural and perfume free cleaning agents.
- Get rid of cleaners with the words Danger, Warning, or POISON on the labels. Avoid cleaners with ammonia, bleach, chlorine, formaldehyde, hydrochloric acid, lye, naphtha, nitrobenzene, petroleum, perchloroethylene, sodium laurel sulfates, propylene glycol, or trichlorethane.
- Refer to EWG Guide to Healthy Cleaning for more information.
- Make your own cleaning agents with baking soda, vinegar, hydrogen peroxide, lemons, and essential oils.

Flame Retardants

- Prevent young children from placing materials with fire retardants in their mouths.
- Use the EWG list of PBDE free companies before buying electronic items.
- Make sure children's pajamas are free of flame retardants. Buy pajamas that are labeled free of chemical retardants and/or are 100% cotton.

Simple Strategies for Lowering Your Exposure to Environmental Toxins

- When purchasing a new mattress, choose one that has not been treated with chemicals and is made from cotton, wool, or latex foam. Some 'natural' latex foam contains fire retardants. Or, place an organic wool topper on top of your regular mattress to minimize exposure to flame retardants.
- Make sure all bedding, including sheets, blankets, and comforters, are made from natural fabrics and are chemical free.
- Purchase car seats, high chairs, and strollers from companies that are committed to not using flame retardants.

Cookware and Food Storage

- Glass and ceramic are the ideal cookware. Make sure that the ceramic is high grade and lead free.
- Stainless steel may be used occasionally. However, when acidic foods are cooked in stainless steel, some nickel is leached out of the cookware
- Black cast iron may also be used. Check what material the cast iron was seasoned and finished with as it may contain chemicals.
- Do not use aluminum or non-stick cookware
- Look for BPA free cans and bottles.
- When storing foods, use glass containers, paper bags, and chlorine free wax paper in place of plastics

Environmental Working Group Tips for Choosing and Handling Plastics

- Avoid bisphenol-A (BPA) and phthalates. Both are potent hormone disruptors
- Stay away from toys marked "3" or PVC, which are often mixed with phthalates
- Avoid containers marked "7" or PC as they often contain BPA
- When you must use plastics, choose #1,2,4 or 5
- Don't microwave foods in plastics.
- Don't place hot liquids in plastic containers.
- Don't reuse single use plastics-they can break down.
- Use wooden or glass cutting boards in place of plastic.
- For more information see www.ewg.org

Simple Strategies for Lowering Your Exposure to Environmental Toxins

Toiletries and Beauty Products

- Don't place anything on your skin that you wouldn't eat.
- Use fewer products with minimal ingredients.
- Check labels and ingredients. Avoid: fragrances, parabens, ,mineral oil, PEG (polyethylene glycol), PG (propylene glycol), sodium laurel sulfate (SLS) & sodium laureth sulfates (SLES), triclosan & triclocarban, Dyes, , DEA (diethanolamine), MEA (monoethanolamine) and TEA (triethanolamine), Imidaolidinyl Urea and DMDM Hydanotoin , isopropyl alcohol and toluene.
- Use fluoride free and SLS free toothpaste.
- Check your products, from shampoos to make-up, at EWG's Cosmetics Database.

Mold Toxins

- Mold grows in the presence of heat and excess moisture.
- Prevent mold growth in the bathroom by turning on the ventilation fan whenever you shower or bathe.
- Indoor humidity should be less than 55% relative humidity. Use a dehumidifier in any damp spaces (attics, basements, etc.)
- Properly and promptly clean up any water leaks Examine any areas with excess moisture or leaks for mold growth.

This material may be reproduced in its entirety, without modification, and freely distributed in written or electronic form without requesting formal permission.