A Fast Look from EHHI

A Plastics, Microplastics & Nanoplastics Checklist

Where Plastics Sneak Into Our Lives and How You Can Reduce Exposure

Microplastics and nanoplastics are found throughout our environment and in many everyday products. While research continues to better understand their effects on human health, you can take steps to reduce unnecessary exposures.

In the Kitchen & Dining

- ☐ Drink filtered tap water when appropriate instead of bottled water.
- ☐ Store food in glass, stainless steel, or ceramic containers instead of plastic.
- ☐ Avoid microwaving food in plastic containers.
- ☐ Avoid placing hot foods or liquids in plastic containers.
- ☐ Replace scratched or damaged plastic food containers.
- ☐ Reduce use of plastic wrap on warm foods.
- ☐ Choose fresh foods over heavily processed foods packaged in plastic.
- ☐ Use reusable water bottles made from stainless steel or glass.

Around the Home

- ☐ Vacuum regularly using a HEPA filter.
- ☐ Wet dust instead of dry dusting to capture fine particles.
- ☐ Open windows when outdoor air quality permits.
- ☐ Choose natural fiber rugs, curtains, and furniture.
- ☐ Replace old foam furniture that is breaking down.
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary plastic household items when replacing products.

Clothing & Personal Care

- ☐ Choose clothing made from natural fibers such as cotton, wool, or linen.
- ☐ Wash synthetic clothing only when needed.
- ☐ Wash full loads of laundry to reduce microfiber shedding.
- ☐ Air dry clothing to reduce wear on synthetic fabrics.
- ☐ Avoid personal care products containing plastic microbeads.
- ☐ Choose reusable personal care products.

Outdoors & Recreation

- ☐ Support playgrounds that use wood chips or engineered wood fiber instead of shredded tire rubber.
- ☐ Support athletic fields that use natural grass.
- ☐ Avoid burning plastics or household waste.
- ☐ Dispose of plastics properly to help prevent pollution of waterways.
- ☐ Participate in community cleanups to reduce plastic pollution before it breaks down into microplastics.

Shopping & Everyday Choices

- ☐ Bring reusable shopping bags.
- ☐ Choose products with less plastic packaging.
- ☐ Buy long-lasting durable products.
- ☐ Use less single-use plastics such as utensils, plates, cups, and straws.
- ☐ Select refillable products when possible.
- ☐ Read labels and avoid products with unnecessary plastic components.

Every Small Change Helps

You don't have to eliminate plastics from your life to reduce exposure. Small, practical choices—especially around food, drinking water, household products, clothing, and recreation—can help reduce unnecessary contact with microplastics and nanoplastics while supporting a healthier environment.

EHHI is dedicated to protecting human health from environmental harms through research, education, and the promotion of sound public policies.

Learn more and keep up to date on environmental issues that impact human health at...

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A Drinking Water Checklist

Practical Steps for Private Wells & Public Water Systems

Clean drinking water is essential to good health. While the United States has one of the safest drinking water systems in the world, contaminants can still enter drinking water through aging infrastructure, naturally occurring minerals, industrial pollution, or household plumbing. Knowing where your water comes from is the first step toward protecting your health.

If You Have a Public Water System

- ☐ Read your community's annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).
- ☐ Learn whether lead, PFAS, arsenic, nitrates, or other contaminants have been detected in your water system.
- ☐ Know whether your home has older plumbing that may contain lead.
- ☐ Run cold water before drinking or cooking if water has been sitting in pipes for several hours.
- ☐ Use only cold tap water for drinking, cooking, and preparing infant formula.
- ☐ Consider using a certified water filter if recommended for your area or household.
- ☐ Stay informed about boil-water advisories and other water notices.
- ☐ Contact your local water utility if you notice unusual taste, odor, or discoloration.

Protecting Water Resources

- ☐ Properly dispose of paints, chemicals, medications, and hazardous waste.
- ☐ Limit unnecessary use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides.
- ☐ Pick up pet waste to help protect local waterways.
- ☐ Support efforts to protect rivers, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, and groundwater.
- ☐ Stay informed about drinking water issues affecting your community.

If You Have a Private Well

- ☐ Test your well water regularly for bacteria, nitrates, and other contaminants.
- ☐ Test for arsenic, PFAS, radon, or other contaminants if recommended in your region.
- ☐ Inspect your well and well cap periodically for damage.
- ☐ Keep hazardous chemicals, fuel, and fertilizers away from the wellhead.
- ☐ Maintain your septic system to help protect groundwater.
- ☐ Keep records of all water quality tests and well maintenance.
- ☐ After flooding or major repairs, have your well tested before drinking.
- ☐ Consider treatment systems only after identifying contaminants.

Water at Home

- ☐ Drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated.
- ☐ Replace water filters according to manufacturer recommendations.
- ☐ Clean reusable water bottles regularly.
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary use of single-use plastic water bottles.
- ☐ Learn where your drinking water comes from and how it is treated.

Safe Water Starts with Staying Informed

Whether your drinking water comes from a public water system or a private well, regular monitoring, informed decisions, and routine maintenance can help reduce environmental exposures and protect your family's health.

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A Healthful Home Checklist

Practical Steps to Create a Healthier Indoor Environment

Our homes should support health, not contribute to unnecessary environmental exposures. Many potential environmental health risks can be reduced through informed choices and routine household practices. While no home can eliminate every environmental exposure, small changes can help create healthier living environments for you and your family.

Indoor Air Quality

- ☐ Do not allow smoking or vaping inside the home.
- ☐ Replace HVAC filters regularly according to manufacturer recommendations.
- ☐ Use kitchen exhaust fans when cooking.
- ☐ Vent bathrooms to reduce excess moisture and mold.
- ☐ Open windows when weather and outdoor air quality permit.
- ☐ Test your home for radon if you live in an area where radon is a concern.
- ☐ Consider using a portable HEPA air cleaner in frequently occupied rooms if needed.

Drinking Water

- ☐ Review your community's annual Consumer Confidence Report.
- ☐ Test private well water regularly if your home uses a well.
- ☐ Learn whether PFAS, lead, arsenic, or nitrates have been detected in your local water supply.
- ☐ Consider using a certified water filter if recommended for your area.

Household Products

- ☐ Follow product label instructions carefully.
- ☐ Store chemicals safely away from children.
- ☐ Dispose of paints, solvents, pesticides, and cleaners through local hazardous waste programs.
- ☐ Choose products with fewer unnecessary chemicals.

Food & Food Storage

- ☐ Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- ☐ Store food in glass, stainless steel, or ceramic containers.
- ☐ Avoid microwaving food in plastic containers unless they are specifically designed for microwave use.
- ☐ Reduce unnecessary use of single-use plastics for food and beverages.

Cleaning

- ☐ Vacuum regularly using a HEPA-filter.
- ☐ Wet dust (instead of dry dust) surfaces.
- ☐ Clean visible mold promptly and correct moisture problems.
- ☐ Remove shoes at the door to reduce tracking pesticides, lead, and other contaminants indoors.

Pest Management

- ☐ Prevent pests by sealing cracks and eliminating food and water sources.
- ☐ Use integrated pest management (IPM) practices whenever possible.
- ☐ Follow pesticide directions carefully if chemical treatments are necessary.

Renovations

- ☐ Choose low-VOC paints and finishes.
- ☐ Ventilate during painting or remodeling.
- ☐ Older homes may contain lead-based paint or asbestos. Follow recommended safety practices before disturbing these materials.

Children

- ☐ Wash children's hands before eating.
- ☐ Clean toys and frequently touched surfaces regularly.
- ☐ Choose age-appropriate products that meet current safety standards.
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary exposure to tobacco smoke and vaping aerosols.

Stay Informed

- ☐ Read EHHI's environmental health resources.
- ☐ Follow updates from trusted public health organizations.
- ☐ Learn about environmental health issues affecting your community.

Small Changes Can Make a Difference

Creating a healthier home doesn't require doing everything at once. Many environmental health risks can be reduced through simple, practical actions taken over time. By staying informed and making thoughtful choices, families can help create healthier indoor environments that support lifelong health.

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