A Fast Look from EHHI

A Toxic Substances Checklist

Practical Steps to Reduce Everyday Chemical Exposures

Many chemicals make modern life more convenient, but some have also been linked to cancer, reproductive harm, developmental disorders, asthma, and other chronic diseases. While no one can eliminate all exposures, small everyday choices can significantly reduce contact with potentially harmful substances.

At Home

- ☐ Choose fragrance-free cleaning and personal care products.
- ☐ Avoid air fresheners and heavily scented products.
- ☐ Read product labels and choose safer alternatives.
- ☐ Store food in glass, stainless steel, or ceramic instead of plastic.
- ☐ Never microwave food in plastic.
- ☐ Replace damaged non-stick cookware.
- ☐ Vacuum with a HEPA filter and wet dust regularly to reduce household dust that can contain toxic chemicals.
- ☐ Wash hands frequently, especially before eating.

Food & Drinking Water

- ☐ Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- ☐ Choose fresh or frozen foods over canned foods to avoid can linings.
- ☐ Reduce consumption of highly processed foods.
- ☐ Follow local fish consumption advisories for mercury and other contaminants.
- ☐ Use a certified water filter if drinking water contains contaminants.
- ☐ Minimize single-use plastics, especially for hot food and beverages.

In Your Community

- ☐ Support efforts to reduce toxic chemical releases into air and water.
- ☐ Encourage safer school, workplace, and municipal purchasing policies.
- ☐ Advocate for stronger chemical safety testing and transparency.
- ☐ Participate in household hazardous waste collection programs.

Protect Children & Families

- ☐ Keep hazardous household chemicals locked and out of children's reach.
- ☐ Choose toys and children's products that meet current safety standards.
- ☐ Remove shoes at the door to reduce tracking pesticides and other contaminants into the home.
- ☐ Wash children's hands frequently, especially before meals.
- ☐ During pregnancy, follow guidance on limiting mercury, BPA, and other environmental exposures.

Around the Home & Yard

- ☐ Minimize pesticide and herbicide use whenever possible.
- ☐ Use integrated pest management (IPM) approaches before applying chemicals.
- ☐ Properly store and dispose of paints, solvents, batteries, and hazardous household waste.
- ☐ Choose low-VOC paints, sealants, and building materials.
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary use of synthetic turf where practical because of concerns about heat, chemical exposure, and microplastic release.

Reduce Plastic Exposure

- ☐ Carry a reusable water bottle made of stainless steel or glass.
- ☐ Bring reusable grocery bags and produce bags.
- ☐ Reduce purchases of single-use plastics whenever practical.
- ☐ Recycle accepted plastics correctly.
- ☐ Support businesses and policies that reduce unnecessary plastic packaging.

Small Changes Make a Difference

Reducing exposure to toxic substances does not require perfection. Choosing safer products, reducing unnecessary plastics, improving indoor environments, and supporting healthier public policies can help protect individuals, families, and future generations.

For more than 25 years, EHHI has investigated emerging environmental health risks—including endocrine-disrupting chemicals, pesticides, plastics and microplastics, synthetic turf, toxic consumer products, and children's environmental health.

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

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