WHY REDUCE EXPOSURE?

U.S. chemical law is outdated >>>

Federal chemical regulation, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), has not been updated since it was passed in 1976. Today, complete health screening data is available for about 7% of over 84,000 chemicals registered for use. TSCA has successfully banned only 5 toxic chemicals in almost 4 decades compared with thousands of chemicals banned in the European Union.

We are exposed to unknown mixtures of synthetic chemicals daily >>>

We are exposed to hundreds of man-made chemicals every day. Scientists are just beginning to study how chemicals interact when we are exposed to many in combination and how exposures add up over a lifetime. In the meantime, there are ways to reduce common chemical exposures which are suspected of causing health problems (see inside).

Infants and children are most vulnerable >>>

The human body is more vulnerable during certain sensitive periods of development, or “windows of susceptibility.” For example, early life exposures in the womb, throughout infancy and childhood, and during puberty, could lead to negative health effects later in life.

LET US INTRODUCE OURSELVES!

The Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC) is dedicated to preventing environmental causes of breast cancer through community education, research advocacy, and changes to public policy.

Many chemicals of concern are industrial chemicals that don’t stay isolated inside factories. Studies have found hundreds of man-made chemicals in our air, water, food, consumer products, and in samples of human blood and urine.

Let’s Talk Prevention: Reducing Toxic Exposures is a project to prevent diseases, like breast cancer, by describing ways to avoid harmful chemicals. As part of that project, this brochure provides basic steps to reduce toxic exposures in the home and choose safer alternatives to harmful products used daily.

CONTACT US

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Here are seven of the easiest steps you can take to reduce exposure for yourself and your family. Don’t become overwhelmed – start with small steps to reduce exposure and increase from there!

### Wash your hands >>>
Wash your hands frequently, especially before eating and after handling chemicals, including cleaning products. Use soap without parabens and triclosan (see side panel).

### Shorten showers >>>
Take shorter showers to limit inhalation of airborne chemicals and reduce skin absorption of chemicals from water and shower products.

### Store food safely >>>
Transfer food and leftovers into an airtight glass, stainless steel, or ceramic container. Try not to use plastic food or beverage containers for cooking or storage. Chemicals like BPA and phthalates (see side panel) can move from plastic into food, especially when heated, so avoid microwaving plastic.

### Keep air fresh >>>
Open windows every so often to ventilate indoor air. Don’t allow smoking inside and avoid using commercial air fresheners which can contain unsafe fragrance chemicals. Toxic chemicals, such as flame retardants (see side panel), settle in house dust so keep dust levels low by using a vacuum with a HEPA filter and cleaning with a wet mop/rag or a microfiber cloth - these can trap dust without chemical additives.

### Buy fresh & organic >>>
Buy organic produce as often as possible. Fresh is best but go for dried or frozen instead of canned. This will reduce exposure to pesticide residues on produce and BPA and phthalates (see side panel) in food packaging and cans.

### Educate >>>
Educate yourself and your family about the dangers of toxic chemicals. Investigate safer alternatives to products you use often, such as cleaning products, toiletries, cosmetics, lawn care etc.

### For More Information >>>
**Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition, www.mbcc.org**

Silent Spring Institute, research non-profit founded by the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition to investigate the link between the environment and health, especially breast cancer, www.silentspring.org
