



# MASSACHUSETTS BREAST CANCER COALITION



## REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE

For over two decades, the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC) has advocated for increased safety of consumer products. We will continue to work for legislative reform and enforcement of policies that reduce the presence of carcinogenic and/or endocrine disrupting chemicals in these products. In the meantime, we believe consumers can take steps to reduce exposure to carcinogenic and endocrine disrupting chemicals.

**1) Pay attention to food packaging** – *Choose fresh or frozen foods over canned, and choose glass or stainless steel containers instead of plastic.* If you must use plastic, avoid #3, #6, and #7. Never heat any kind of plastic food containers in the microwave.

**2) Trust your nose** – *If it smells bad, it's probably bad for you.* The smell of a new shower curtain, a new car, and dry cleaned clothes are all due to hazardous chemicals that should be avoided. Instead of a plastic shower curtain, buy a cotton or nylon one. If you dry clean your clothes, ask that they be treated without tetrachloroethylene, also known as "PERC." Many dry cleaners already follow these guidelines but make sure that your neighborhood offers safe dry cleaners too.

**3) Eat less char** – *When grilling foods, minimize char by reducing the heat level and/or using marinades.* The blackened part of barbecued foods can be delicious, but it can also be hazardous to our health. Char contains polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) which are known to cause tumors in animals.

**4) Vacuum regularly** – *Many toxins are released from furnishings and products as dust particles.* Minimize dust by using a vacuum fit with a HEPA filter.

*Since World War II, over **85,000** synthetic chemicals have been manufactured and released onto the market. Less than **10%** of these have been tested for impacts on human health.*

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## **Try to Avoid These Dangerous Chemicals**

**BPA (Bisphenol A)** used in sports bottles, baby bottles and sippy cups, food can linings, etc.

**Atrazine** in herbicides, weed killers, pesticides etc.

**BHA** in hair relaxers, skin lighteners, lipsticks, and other cosmetics.

**Placenta** in skin and hair conditioners, etc.

**Lead** in lipsticks, hair dyes, children's toys, etc.

**Phthalates** in hair spray, nail polish, deodorants and fragrance, shower curtains, and similar soft plastics.

**Parabens** in cosmetics, lotions, and deodorants.

**Hydroquinone** in skin lightening creams and gels.

**Fragrance** in shampoo, lotion, perfume, cologne/musk, cleaning products, etc.

**Mercury** in eye drops, mascara and skin lighteners, etc.

**Formaldehyde** in nail polish, wall board, lab preservative, aerosol products, etc.

**DEA** found in many household cleaning products

**Xylene** in floor polishers, iron aids, spot removers, etc.

**Monoethanolamine** in oven cleaners, tub and tile cleaners, carpet cleaners, etc.

**5) Choose natural and organic furnishings** – *Many things inside your home may be sprayed or made with flame retardant chemicals that are carcinogens or endocrine disruptors.* These are commonly found in toys, plastic furniture, furniture foams and upholstery, clothing, small appliances, and wire insulation and can release toxins into the air as dust particles.

**6) Read labels** – *Before buying, read the labels of your personal care products, cleaning products, pesticides, and even furniture.* Some chemicals in these products have been associated with cancer, impaired fertility, impaired brain function and birth defects. Where are they found? See a list of chemicals of concern on the left-hand sidebar. Look for products that are free of these ingredients, and don't hesitate to ask your local retailer to sell products that are free of these toxins. There are many inexpensive healthy alternatives on the market. Your questions and demands help to bring about change.

**7) Explore alternatives** – *Research natural alternatives to cleaning products, personal care products, pesticides, and lawn care products.* You'll be amazed at what you can find!

**8) Use your strong citizen power** – *Refuse to be contaminated with carcinogens and endocrine disrupting chemicals!* Visit MBCC's Policy & Legislation page on [www.mbcc.org](http://www.mbcc.org) to learn more and take action on proposed environmental health legislation.

**YOUR VOICE AND ACTION IS NEEDED  
IN MBCC CAMPAIGNS TO PREVENT  
BREAST CANCER BEFORE IT STARTS!**

Visit [www.mbcc.org](http://www.mbcc.org) for volunteer opportunities and information about upcoming events. Stay in the loop: to receive updates, subscribe to our eNewsletter, "Like" us on Facebook at [facebook.com/mbccorg](https://facebook.com/mbccorg), and follow us on Twitter @mbccprevention