

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U.S. chemical law is outdated 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.

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Let's Talk Prevention: Reducing Toxic Exposures



Know these common chemicals of concern...

BPA (Bisphenol A) in food can linings, store receipts, and plastic products like water bottles, food containers, and toys. Use fresh or frozen foods instead of canned and avoid microwaving plastic containers.

Flame Retardants such as PBDE and others in electronics, furniture, and children's pajamas. These chemicals can settle in house dust so keep dust levels low (see "Keep air fresh" at right). Also, choose children's pajamas labeled as "not flame resistant."

PAHs (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) in charred meats, tobacco smoke, and car exhaust. Minimize char when grilling by using marinades, reducing heat level and avoiding prolonged cooking times.

Parabens in toiletries and cosmetics. Check for products without parabens as an ingredient or those labeled "Paraben-free."

Perfluorinated Compounds in stain resistant clothing and nonstick cookware. Use cast iron or steel clad pots/pans instead of nonstick.

Pesticides including weed and bug killers used in the home and garden or nearby in agriculture. Store food tightly, wipe up crumbs, and seal cracks in windows and doors. Purchase organic produce when possible.

Phthalates in soft plastics like shower curtains, fragrances, toiletries and cosmetics. Choose products labeled phthalate-free and opt for cloth shower curtains instead of vinyl.

Triclosan in toiletries and cosmetics such as antibacterial soap and toothpaste. Check labels for products without triclosan.

Take time to read product labels

Some products may contain chemicals that are not listed on the label. For example, the ingredient "**fragrance**" can represent large mixtures of potentially harmful chemicals.

Choose cleaning products, toiletries, and cosmetics labeled "**Fragrance-free.**"

Look for "**flame retardant-free**" not "**flame resistant**" or "**TB 117 compliant**" on children's pajamas, furniture, and bedding.

Try to avoid cookware and clothing labeled as "**stain resistant**" or "**non-stick.**"

SEVEN BASIC STEPS TO REDUCE EXPOSURE...

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).

Take off your shoes >>>

Leave shoes at the door to avoid tracking pesticides and other chemicals inside. Ask guests to do the same. Chemicals tracked into your home can build up inside carpeting and pose risks, especially to babies and pets.



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.

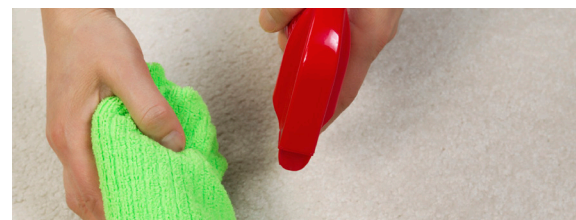


Buy fresh & organic >>>

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.silent.spring.org

"Breast Cancer and the Environment: Prioritizing Prevention" report released February 2013 by the federal Interagency Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Coordinating Committee available at www.niehs.nih.gov/about/boards/ibcercc/

"Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What we can do now" 2008-2009 annual report of the President's Cancer Panel, available at <http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/>