



POLLUTION IN PEOPLE

OREGON
ENVIRONMENTAL
COUNCIL

It's your Oregon.

While it's not possible to solve the problem of chemical exposure without a broader, policy-based approach, here are some effective, low-cost steps you can take to help reduce your exposure:

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO

1

Keep the lead out. Avoid old, handmade, or imported ceramic dishware, which may leach more lead than permitted by the FDA. Avoid vinyl lunch bags purchased more than a year ago (some of which may contain lead), and avoid purchasing plastic toys, especially from vending machines.

2

Choose safer plastic products by avoiding recycling codes #3 and #7. Plastics marked with the #3 symbol contain phthalates and those with #7 (except when bio-based) contain bisphenol A, both known endocrine disruptors.

3

Buy organic or sustainably produced fruits and vegetables. Buying produce certified Organic, Food Alliance, or Salmon-Safe is usually the best assurance of reduced pesticides or pesticide-free produce. It's especially important to buy organically grown peaches, apples, bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, grapes (imported), spinach, lettuce, and potatoes. These items typically contain the highest levels of pesticide residues. Wash produce well before preparing.

4

Know your seafood. Fish species that are known to be high in mercury are long-lived, large predators. Examples include king mackerel, swordfish, orange roughy, marlin, and canned white albacore. Women and children should not eat tilefish or tuna steaks, and should also limit their consumption of canned tuna. Lower-mercury choices include wild salmon, sardines, anchovies, Dungeness crab, clams, mussels, and Pacific oysters.

5

Minimize the use of canned foods and canned drinks. Until industry reformulates the bisphenol A-containing lacquer lining of metal cans, choose fresh or frozen foods or glass containers or bottles. A recent study by Environmental Working Group found bisphenol A in more than half of the brand name canned goods they tested.

6

Avoid using pesticides in your home and garden. There are many non-chemical methods of pest control that are safe and effective. Pesticides such as weed killers and insecticides should be used as a last resort, if at all. Focus on preventive techniques, which are most effective in the long run.

7

Avoid Teflon and other non-stick cookware. If you do choose to use non-stick cookware, do not overheat or burn them. PFCs (the Teflon chemical and a probable carcinogen) are released when the cookware reaches 450° F. Discard products when the non-stick coatings show signs of deterioration.

8

Make your meat and dairy lean. PCBs and dioxins accumulate in fatty tissues. Choose lean meat cuts and low-fat dairy to avoid exposure. Cut off visible fat before cooking meat and choose lower-fat cooking methods: broiling, grilling, roasting, or pressure-cooking. Avoid frying meat in lard, bacon grease, or butter.

9

Avoid stain-resistant furniture and carpets. Choose furniture and carpets that aren't marked "stain-resistant." Decline treatments and ask for products that have not been pretreated with products such as Stainmaster. These treatments contain PFCs, probable carcinogens.

10

Purchase phthalate-free beauty products. Avoid nail polish, perfumes, colognes, and other scented products that are labeled as containing phthalates. Many scented products simply list "fragrance" as an ingredient, which often incorporates a number of different chemicals including phthalates. Even if a product is advertised as fragrance-free, look at the ingredient list and make sure that a masking fragrance is not included. Avoid these products or do additional research.