



A Healthier Home

Simple steps to protecting our families from toxic substances



Toxic substances are chemicals and elements that can harm your health

Everyone is exposed to toxic substances every day. This brochure can help you take simple steps to prevent or reduce your exposure to these substances. Our goal is to help you protect your health and your family's health.

Exposure to toxic substances can be harmful to everyone and could make it harder to get pregnant. Developing fetuses, infants, children, pre-teens and teenagers are especially vulnerable. Being exposed to even small amounts of toxic substances during important times of development can lead to disease early in life, later in life, or even across generations.

Some toxic substances build up in our bodies. This build-up can affect our health long after we have been exposed. This is why the recommendations here are designed for women, men and children. They apply to all of us, whether or not we have children, are pregnant or want to have children in the future.

Luminis Health's mission is to enhance the health of the people and communities we serve. Use this brochure to explore ways we can help you and your family live healthier together.



Tobacco free

- Talk to your doctor if you need help quitting.
- Don't let people smoke around you and stay away from public places where people are smoking.

Luminis Health has tobacco treatment specialists offering free resources and medication to help you quit, **call 443-481-5366**.

Avoid antimicrobials

Multiple studies have confirmed that the addition of antibacterial and antimicrobial chemicals to cleaning products is not necessary and contributes to antibiotic resistant bugs.

- Avoid "antibacterial", "antimicrobial" or "anti-odor" products.
- Use products free of triclosan or triclocarban. Triclosan is often found in soaps, toothpaste and cosmetics.

Use non-toxic personal care products

Many products have ingredients that are not recommended for you or your baby.

- Shop for non-toxic and organic certified products when available.
- Avoid artificial fragrances.
- Avoid aerosol sprays and powders.
- Use fewer products.

Luminis Health has multiple baby classes. Register online at LuminisHealth.org/Events.

Pest free

Pesticides are toxic chemicals used for killing insects, rodents, weeds, bacteria and mold, but they can also harm your health.

- Keep insects and rodents out of your home.
 - Clean up crumbs and spills.
 - Store food in tightly closed containers.
 - Seal cracks around doors, window sills, and baseboards.
 - Repair drips and holes.
 - Get rid of standing water.
- Use baits and traps instead of sprays, dusts and bombs.
- Don't use chemical tick-and-flea collars, flea baths, or flea dips.
- Hire only licensed pest exterminators.

Visit the Maryland Pesticide Network to learn more tips on being a pest free home: www.mdpestnet.org.

Take off your shoes

Shoes can carry toxic chemicals into your home.

- Remove shoes upon entering a home. Wipe shoes on a sturdy doormat if you want to keep them on.

Clean your home with non-toxic products

- Choose products that are listed as non-toxic or Green Seal™ certified.

Get out your mop

Toxic substances like lead, pesticides, and flame retardants are present in dust. Sweeping or dusting with a dry cloth can spread the dust into the air instead of removing it.

- Use a wet mop or wet cloth to clean floors and surfaces.
- Choose microfiber cloths when available.



Choose eco-friendly dry cleaning

Many dry cleaning systems use toxic chemicals called perchloroethylene (PERC). Dry cleaned clothes release these chemicals, exposing you and polluting the air in your home.

- Most clothes labeled “dry-clean only” can be washed with water. Hand wash these clothes or ask your dry cleaner to “wet clean” them for you.

Plastics: Use less and pick carefully

Some plastics release toxic chemicals like Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), Phthalates and Bisphenol A (BPA).

- Choose food containers made of glass, stainless steel or ceramic.
- Heat makes plastic release chemicals. Don't use plastic container for hot foods or drinks. Use glass instead of plastic in the microwave.
- Avoid products made with soft PVC, which is plastic number 3. Some shower curtains and toys are made with PVC.
- Avoid disposable plastic products. Plastic waste pollutes our environment. Toxic chemicals in the environment tend to end up in our bodies.
- Switch to tempered glass baby bottles instead of plastic. If you use plastic bottles, don't heat them.



Choose safer home improvements

Many paints, glues and flooring materials can release toxic chemicals long after you complete a project. Toxic substances like lead, pesticides, and flame retardants are present in dust. Sweeping or dusting with a dry cloth can spread the dust into the air instead of removing it.

- Ask for “volatile organic compound (VOC)-free” and “water-based” materials.
- If you are pregnant, don't work on or near remodeling projects.
- Avoid recently remodeled rooms.



Keep mercury and toxic substances out of your diet, home, and garbage

- Choose fish that are less contaminated with mercury.
- Check local fish advisories. Fish advisories are warnings about fish. Don't eat the fish you or others catch before checking these warnings to make sure the fish is safe to eat. Learn more about safe fish consumption at the Maryland Department of the Environment Fish Consumption Advisory website.
- Replace your mercury thermometer with a digital one. Don't throw your mercury thermometer or any other item containing mercury (such as compact fluorescent light bulbs) in the trash. To find out where to bring these items for disposal, contact your local health department or **call the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at: 800-232-4636.**
- Never throw toxic substances down drains or toilets or in the garbage. Examples of toxic substances include car oil, gasoline, pesticides, paints, solvents and medicines. Contact your local health department to find out how to safely dispose of those substances.

Avoid pesticides and other toxic substances in food and water

- Whenever possible, eat USDA organic certified food to reduce your exposure to pesticides. If you can't buy organic produce, choose the fruits and vegetables with the least pesticide residue and avoid the most contaminated ones. The Environmental Working Group's (EWG) Clean 15™ and Dirty Dozen™ lists on the following pages can be used as a guide when shopping.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with running water.
- Limit foods high in animal fat. Many toxic substances build up in animal fat.
- Avoid canned foods and beverages as much as you can. Eat fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables. This helps you avoid exposure to BPA. BPA is a toxic substance used in the lining of most cans.
- Get to know the farmers growing your fruits and vegetables by shopping at your local Farmers Market.

EWG's 2024 Dirty Dozen™

The produce listed on the Dirty Dozen has higher amounts of pesticide residues. When you can, buy these foods organically grown.



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EWG'S 2024

DIRTY DOZEN™

1. Strawberries	7. Nectarines
2. Spinach	8. Apples
3. Kale, Collard & Mustard Greens	9. Bell and hot peppers
4. Grapes	10. Cherries
5. Peaches	11. Blueberries
6. Pears	12. Green beans

EWG's 2024 Clean Fifteen™

EWG's Clean Fifteen list of produce is least likely to contain pesticide residues and does not need to be bought organically.



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EWG'S 2024

CLEAN FIFTEEN™

1. Sweet corn	9. Kiwi
2. Avocados	10. Cabbage
3. Pineapple	11. Watermelon
4. Onions	12. Mushrooms
5. Papaya	13. Mango
6. Sweet peas	14. Sweet potatoes
7. Asparagus	15. Carrots
8. Honeydew melon	

Avoid lead exposure

There may be lead in house paint, water and toys.

■ Paint

- Talk to your doctor if your home was built before 1978, as it may have lead paint.
- If you have lead paint in your home, cover it with a fresh coat of paint, wallpaper or tiles.
- Never sand or remove lead paint yourself. Hire a contractor who is certified in lead abatement.

■ Water

- Get your water tested.
- Let your water run for 60 seconds before consumption.
- Use cold water when cooking.

■ Toys

- Choose only toys made in the USA or that state lead free.
- Avoid letting you child play with antique toys.
- Purchase a lead test kit from your local hardware store.

Test your home for radon

Radon is an odorless, yet radioactive gas found in many basements and ground floors. This is the number one cause of lung cancer for non-smokers.

- Purchase a testing kit at your local hardware store.
- Kits are cheap and easy to use.
- Learn more about radon by calling **1-800-SOS-RADON**.
- Visit: sosradon.org/national-radon-hotlines

Select flame-retardant free products

Select flame-retardant-free products, like couches, pillows, and mattresses. Avoid using crib mattresses, nap mats and other upholstered products with flame retardants. These substances can harm health and affect a child's brain.

- For more information on creating a safe sleep environment for infants, to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), please visit: safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/



Special Thanks:

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