



The information presented here is meant to be empowering. Consumers should be able to make educated decisions about the products they buy and use in their daily environments and choose what is best for them and their families. None of us can realistically eliminate all toxic exposures in modern life, but we can do our best to make informed choices.

For additional information:

- si.molloy.edu
- epa.gov
- ewg.org
- safecosmetics.org
- beyondpesticides.org
- thegreenguide.com
- preventionisthecure.org
- www.neighborhood-network.org
- www.greatneckbcc.org



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Q WHAT ABOUT WATER AND AIR FILTERS?

A quality filter on your kitchen faucet and shower head (or whole house filter) is a better option than purchasing bottled water if you are concerned about contaminants. Plastic bottled water containers may leach chemicals depending on how they are stored, and also create a waste that must be disposed of or recycled. Bottled water may also be less regulated than your tap water. There are many air filters available online also—be careful of those that produce ozone, which is a lung irritant. Always be sure to maintain and change all filters.



10 WAYS TO REDUCE TOXINS IN YOUR DAILY ENVIRONMENT



Q&A

Q WHERE DO I FIND ALTERNATIVES TO TOXIC PRODUCTS?

Alternatives to synthetic pesticides can be found at better nurseries and some large chain stores. Alternative to toxic cleaners, regular plastics, and body products can be found at health food stores, online, and some grocery stores. Most better paint stores and some large chain stores carry non-VOC paints. Natural furniture and carpets may be more difficult to find but are becoming increasingly available, and can be found online. Remember, we as consumers have the power to change the market with our purchases. The greater the demand for healthier alternatives, the more they will become available.



Q WHAT IS HORMONE DISRUPTION?

Also referred to as endocrine disruption, hormone disrupting chemicals interfere with our endocrine system, which regulates the hormones in the body that help organs to function properly. Some hormone disruptors block our natural hormones at the cellular level. Some “mimic” or replace the hormone estrogen, which may increase the risk of breast cancer.

1 Pesticides

Since the 1940s, synthetic pesticides have been used to kill unwanted weeds and insects in our yards, homes, and in agriculture. There are hundreds of types of pesticides, which are associated with health affects such as cancer, hormone disruption, and nerve toxicity. Pesticides are regulated by the Federal and State government, but we shouldn't necessarily assume that a pesticide is safe simply because it is on a store shelf. Certain pesticides in use for years have become banned after their safety has been re-evaluated.



Solution: Buy organically grown food whenever possible. Choose organic lawn care that includes use of compost and natural materials to maintain healthy lawns (see si.molloy.edu for tips and a list of L.I. organic landscapers). Use common sense prevention methods (sanitation and caulking cracks); also look for natural pest control products and hire professionals who use organic products for indoor pests. Always follow label instructions if using a synthetic pesticide.

2 Cleaners

Common cleaners are often petrochemical based and may contain caustic chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that off-gas into the air we breathe.



Some cleaning chemicals contain cancer-causing compounds or may be harmful when mixed together, such as bleach and ammonia. Note: antimicrobial soaps contain the pesticide triclosan, and are usually not

necessary under normal conditions.

Solution: Make natural cleaners out of vinegar and baking soda, or look for natural bio-based cleaners at grocery stores.

3 Dry Cleaners

The vast majority of dry cleaners use the chemical perchloroethylene ("perc"), which is associated with cancer, according to numerous studies.

Solution: Choose a "green" dry cleaner who uses a carbon dioxide based method, or who does "wet" cleaning. If you use a regular dry cleaner, remove plastic bags outside and air out clothing before putting them into your closet.



4 Plastics

Most plastic is made from petrochemicals, and certain kinds contain chemicals associated with cancer and hormone disruption. When plastic is used as a food container, these chemicals may leach into food.

Solution: Look at the bottom of plastic containers for the number in the triangle. Safer plastics include #1, 2, 4, and 5, but it is not advisable to reuse #1 repeatedly. Avoid the use of #3 polyvinyl chloride (PVC), #6- Styrofoam cups, plates, etc., and #7 (Polycarbonate). Some #7 plastics contain the hormone disrupting chemical Bisphenol- A (BPA) which has been found in baby bottles. Use a stainless steel travel mug or choose alternatives to styrofoam and plastic cups that are made of biodegradable materials. Never microwave food in plastic containers.

5 Body Care Products

A study by Environmental Working Group showed that 1/3 of common body products such as lotions, shampoos and make-up contain chemicals that can cause cancer. Many of these products also contain hormone-disrupting chemicals such as phthalates (often found in fragrances) and parabens (preservatives) which are considered weak hormone disruptors. Scientists are not sure of



the cumulative effect of these low-dose exposures.

Solution: Look for body products that contain more natural ingredients and are labeled as fragrance, phthalate and paraben free. Avoid cosmetics that say "nano-tech" on the label.

6 Paints

Common paints, especially oil-based, contain volatile organic compounds that can irritate the respiratory system and cause headaches, nausea, and dizziness, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Solution: Ask specifically for Zero-VOC or Low-VOC paints. The industry is trending in this direction anyway, but make sure it's clear on the label. You'll know when you open it—it should not have an odor.

7 Fire Retardants

Fire retardants such as Polybrominated di-ethers (PBDEs) are used in furniture, mattresses, and electronic equipment. There is a mixed level of concern about these chemicals as scientists are trying to determine if the PBDE levels being found in human fat tissue could lead to cancer. Certain forms of PBDEs are banned in Europe.

Solution: Look for mattresses, pillows, and furnishings made with natural materials such as organic cotton.

8 Carpets

Carpets and their glues can contain multiple chemicals, including formaldehyde (a known carcinogen), toluene, styrene, and benzene.



Solution: Choose tile, wood, or bamboo floors. Use throw rugs made of natural materials such as jute or wool. Ventilate well after new carpet is installed. Vacuum often with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter to reduce dust, mold, and pesticide residues that get trapped in rug fibers.

9 Mold

Mold grows on organic materials such as cloth and wood that remain moist for a duration of time. Certain molds in your home can cause health problems such as headaches, allergic reactions, nausea, and respiratory irritation. Some molds can be toxic to the immune system, nervous system, and to the liver.



Solution: Reduce sources of moisture and be sure to have adequate ventilation in damp areas. If you find extensive mold and suspect it may be toxic (a home testing kit can help determine what type), it is advisable to have a professional remediator remove it for you.

10 Cookware

Non-stick cookware has been shown to emit harmful polymer fumes and, if not maintained well, the coating can chip into food. Aluminum cookware is not recommended because aluminum is associated with Alzheimer's Disease. Aluminum is also found in common deodorants, so

look for aluminum-free.

Solution: Stainless steel, glass, ceramic ware, or cast iron cookware are better options.

