

General Suggestions for Decreasing Toxic Exposure

Various chemicals may cause harm to various organ systems. Below are a variety of suggestions aimed at decreasing overall exposure to toxins.

Top 10 Lifestyle Choices to Decrease Toxin Exposure

1. Avoid using pesticides/herbicides in home and garden.
2. Consider organic whenever possible, but prioritize organic meat and dairy.
3. Be cautious with consumption of large predator fish.
4. Filter water with R/O and carbon filter.
5. Do not get amalgam fillings and/or consider removal.
6. Use “natural” cosmetics, nail polish, and fragrances.
7. Use nontoxic cleaning agents.
8. Use nontoxic building materials and carpets whenever possible in any project or remodel.
9. Avoid living near high-tension power lines.
10. Clean furnace filters regularly; consider HEPA filter.

IN DEPTH

Food

- Shift your food purchases and consumption to organic when possible. It is most important to use organic dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, etc.). Free-range meats and eggs are desirable to purchase as organic. Minimize the use of large fish (swordfish, tuna, etc.) as they are higher in mercury.
- Purchase organic strawberries and apple, and refer to the Environmental Working Group or Consumer Reports web sites to stay current about which fruits and veggies are most important to eat organic.
- Eat fresh whenever possible and limit intake of processed foods. Use caution when eating out at restaurants.
- Prepare food using the safest types of cookware including stainless steel, quality cast iron, glass, or porcelain.
- Buy food that is contained in the safest packaging, such as glass or enamel lined containers, wax paper, non-toxic wood, stainless steel, or best of all, no packaging.

General Products

- Purchase the most natural cleaning and other household products you can find.
- Avoid spraying pesticides or herbicides in your home or property.
- For hair products (including shampoo and colors) look for products without alcohol, sodium lauryl sulfate, paraben, phthalate or other petrochemicals. Check your local yellow pages and magazines to see if there is an environmentally oriented hair salon in your area.
- Avoid using hair sprays.
- Avoid perfumes or other skin or hair care products that use synthetic fragrances.

Skin Care and Makeup

- Use low-toxin make-up and skin creams (avoid products with: phthalates, parabens, propylene glycol, alcohols and fragrances). In general, skin care products from health food stores without the above ingredients are a safer bet.
- Consider using antioxidant creams on your skin: low solvent products with CoQ10, Vit C possibly DMAE and botanical squalene.

Antiperspirants and Deodorant

- Avoid aluminum-containing antiperspirants and antacids. Since virtually all antiperspirants contain aluminum, it may be advisable to minimize or discontinue use.

Water

- Water can have many toxins and thus regular consumption of unfiltered water can significantly contribute to the toxic load of your body.
- Water quality will vary from city to city but in general it is better to filter tap water with a multi-stage carbon filter or reverse osmosis filter.
- Try to avoid bottled water in soft plastic containers as the plastics often leach into the water. Minimize the use of plastic water bottles that have been in a hot car. Use glass or stainless steel bottles instead.
- Minimize the use of camel-back type plastic water containers.
- Mineral waters in glass bottles are generally safe unless there is a question of the quality of the source.
- Have approximately 6-8 glasses of water or healthy liquids each day. Use glass or ceramic when possible.
- Filter shower water in order to limit your exposure to chlorinated hydrocarbons.
- Consider purchasing your own travel water filter

Air

- Avoid exposure to toxic fumes as much as possible including gasoline, exhaust, burnt food, etc.
- Allow toxic out-gassing consumer products to properly ventilate.
- Use home HEPA air filters and HEPA certified vacuums.
- Clean heat/AC vents and AC filters regularly
- Ventilate your home regularly.
- Drive with your windows up and the air set to recirculate (unless your car is new and still off-gassing)

Plastics

- Plastics can disrupt hormones in your body.
- Avoid plastic bottles and containers with the numbers 3, 6 and 7 on the bottom. These are most likely to leach plastics into the food, juice or water that they contain.
- Buy juices and water in glass containers when possible.
- Avoid PVCs.
- Do not microwave in plastic containers.
- Minimize washing plastic containers in the dishwasher under high heat.
- Minimize the use of cling wraps; try to use paper wraps.

Dental Care

- Avoid mercury amalgam fillings.
- Get second opinions on root canals.
- Avoid if possible having 2 different metals in adjacent teeth.
- Pick a dentist who is aware of healthy choices for the mouth—perhaps a more holistic or biologically oriented dentist who does not place new mercury fillings.

Home

- Let a new car off gas by keeping the windows open.
- Use an air filter such as a Hepa filter with a charcoal filter to clean the debris in the air.
- Avoid using pesticides inside or around your house. Use natural orange oil termiting methods, if necessary.
- Use only natural household cleaning supplies.
- Keep your home well ventilated.
- Take off shoes at the door to decrease indoor chemicals and pesticides.
- Change the filter on your furnace every 3 months, using the best allergy furnace filter you can find.

Home or Office Remodel

- Use only green and low VOC products in a remodel or a new home.

- Minimize carpet and choose stone or non-laminated hardwoods (avoid Pergo, for example). If you use carpeting, chose a low or no VOC carpet or rug or use natural carpets.
- Avoid furniture with particle board or buy used furniture that has had a chance to “off gas.”
- Avoid urea formaldehyde in building products.

Electromagnetic Fields

For patients with headaches or regional pain, decrease exposure to low-level electromagnetic fields:

- Minimize cell phone use.
- Minimize your use of portable phones at home and shift to corded phones.
- Take the clock radio away from your head and bed.
- Get the fields measured in a potential new car before you buy it.

Web site references:

www.ewg.org

www.watoxics.org