

# Chemicals to Avoid + Their Health Risks



Everyday products often contain harmful chemicals that are linked to health problems or birth defects.

These are some of the chemicals to try to avoid, especially during pregnancy.

**There is no safe level of these chemicals**



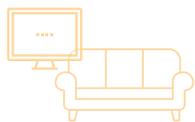
## **BISPHENOLS (BPA and substitutes)**

In plastics and processed foods – can harm male and female fertility, puberty, brains, and lead to tumors



## **DRY-CLEANING CHEMICALS (PERC, TCE)**

Can cause cancer, damage liver and kidneys, affect memory and nervous system, and linked to birth defects in children exposed before they are born



## **FLAME RETARDANTS**

Found in furniture, electronics, and firefighter uniforms – these endocrine disrupters can harm the immune, reproductive, and nervous systems



## **LEAD**

In paint in older homes and contaminated water – linked to heart problems, high blood pressure, lower IQ, delayed growth and development, learning problems



## **MERCURY**

Neurotoxin in large fish and other sources – can lower IQ and affect fine motor skills when a child is exposed before birth



## **PESTICIDES**

Sprayed on food crops – many have been linked to cancer, asthma, lower IQ



## **PFAS/PFOA**

In non-stick pans, rain gear, carpeting, pizza boxes, etc. – can lead to kidney and testicular cancer, high blood pressure, pre-eclampsia, low birthweight



## **PHTHALATES**

In plastics, solvents, personal care products and cosmetics – can affect sexual development and harm immune systems



## **PLASTICIZERS**

Used to make plastics – can leach out and lower fertility and contribute to weight gain



**DREAM**

Discovering cancer Risks from Environmental contaminants And Maternal/child health

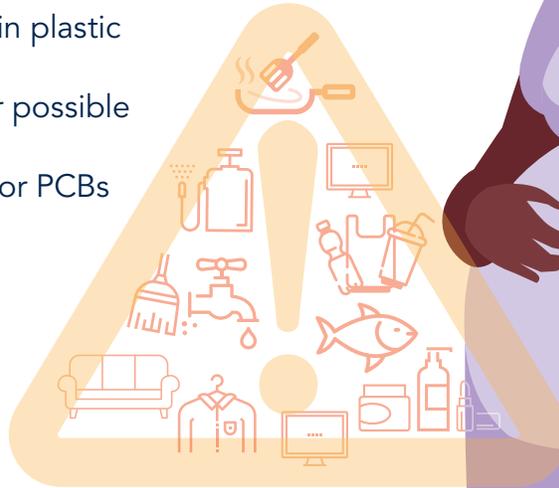


Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment

# 10 Ways to Avoid Harmful Chemicals

There are many chemicals that we are exposed to in everyday life that are harmful, particularly during pregnancy. A list of these chemicals and how they impact our health is on the other side. Here's how to avoid them:

- ✓ Avoid eating, drinking or storing food in plastic containers
- ✓ Cook with cast iron or stainless steel rather than non-stick pans
- ✓ Do not microwave food or drinks in plastic
- ✓ Eat fresh, organic foods whenever possible
- ✓ Avoid eating fish high in mercury or PCBs like tuna and swordfish
- ✓ Limit cosmetics use and opt for fragrance-free products
- ✓ Avoid dry cleaning or stain treating clothes
- ✓ Remove shoes before entering your home
- ✓ Clean with water and vinegar, use a wet mop, and avoid harsh cleaners and fragrance (where companies hide chemicals)
- ✓ Avoid products with flame retardants (electronics, check labels for flame retardants in furniture and mattresses)



## How We Can Change Policy + Products



- ✓ Advocate for policies to prevent exposure to toxic environmental chemicals
- ✓ Call companies whose products you like and ask them to remove harmful chemicals and plastic packaging
- ✓ Use your purchasing power and avoid buying products with harmful chemicals or plastics