

EWG's Healthy Home Tips for Parents

- 1 Choose better body care products.** Just because a label says “gentle” or “natural” doesn’t mean it’s kid-safe. Look up your products on CosmeticsDatabase.com. Read the ingredients and avoid triclosan, BHA, fragrance, and oxybenzone.
- 2 Go organic & eat fresh foods.** Opt for organic fruits and veggies, or use FoodNews.org to find conventionally grown produce with the least pesticides. Choose milk and meat without added growth hormones. Limit canned food and infant formula, as can linings contain bisphenol A (BPA).
- 3 Avoid fire retardants.** Choose snug-fitting cotton pajamas for kids, and repair or replace worn out foam items.
- 4 Pick plastics carefully.** Some plastics contain BPA, which is linked to cancer. Avoid clear, hard plastic bottles marked with a “7” or “PC” and choose baby bottles made from glass or BPA-free plastic. Don’t microwave plastic containers. Stay away from toys marked with a “3” or “PVC.” Give your baby a frozen washcloth instead of vinyl teethers.
- 5 Filter your tap water.** Use a reverse osmosis system or carbon filter pitcher to reduce your family’s exposure to impurities in water, like chlorine and lead. Don’t drink bottled water, which isn’t necessarily better. Mix infant formula with fluoride-free water.
- 6 Wash those hands.** In addition to reducing illness, frequent hand washing will reduce kids’ exposure to chemicals. Skip anti-bacterial soaps, since they can be bad for the environment, aren’t any better than soap and water, and can contain pesticides that are absorbed through the skin.
- 7 Skip non-stick.** When overheated non-stick cookware can emit toxic fumes. Cook with cast iron or stainless steel instead.
- 8 Use a HEPA-filter vacuum.** Kids spend lots of time on the floor, and household dust can contain contaminants like lead and fire retardants. HEPA-filter vacuums capture the widest range of particles and get rid of allergens. Leave your shoes at the door so you don’t bring more pollutants inside.
- 9 Get your iodine.** Use iodized salt, especially while pregnant and nursing, and take iodine-containing prenatal vitamins. Iodine buffers against chemicals like perchlorate, which can disrupt your thyroid system and affect brain development during pregnancy and infancy.
- 10 Use greener cleaners & avoid pesticides.** Household cleaners, bug killers, pet treatments, and air fresheners can irritate kids’ lungs, especially if your kids have asthma. Investigate less toxic alternatives. Use vinegar in place of bleach, baking soda to scrub your tiles, and hydrogen peroxide to remove stains.
- 11 Eat good fats.** Omega-3 fatty acids can offset toxic effects of lead and mercury. They’re in fish, eggs, nuts, oils, and produce. Choose low-mercury fish like salmon, tilapia and pollock, rather than high-mercury tuna and swordfish, especially if you’re pregnant. Breast milk is the best source of good fats (and other benefits) for babies, and protects them from toxic chemicals.

