

Resources

Your Local Health Department

Look in your phone book to find the number.
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm>

Washington State Department of Health

Consumer Assistance Line: 1-800-525-0127
Division of Environmental Health
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/>

Washington State Department of Ecology

Recycling Hotline: 1-800-732-9253
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/>

American Lung Association of Washington

Toxics are a greater risk for children with asthma or other chronic conditions. For information on asthma triggers and home assessments call 1-800-732-9339 or visit <http://www.alaw.org>

Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at the University of Washington

To consult with a pediatric environmental health specialist, call 1-877-543-2436.
<http://depts.washington.edu/pehsu/>

Institute for Children's Environmental Health

A clearinghouse of information about local and national activities intended to reduce children's exposure to toxics. <http://www.iceh.org>

This brochure was developed by Thurston County Public Health and Social Services. It has been revised by Washington Department of Health for statewide use. For additional copies, call 1-877-485-7316 or e-mail lorraine.edwards@doh.wa.gov.

For persons with disabilities, this brochure is also available in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-877-485-7316 (TTY/TDD: 711).

Protect KIDS FROM TOXICS

Look inside for ways to protect
children from toxic chemicals



Toxics* are especially harmful to children.

Children are more affected by toxic chemicals for many reasons. They are smaller than adults and their bodies are still developing. Children eat more, drink more, and even breathe more than adults in relation to their body size. Babies need to play on the floor so they can grow and develop. Very young children explore their world by putting their hands and feet in their mouths and by sucking on toys and other objects.

Toxic chemicals are found in dirt that is tracked in from outdoors onto floors and carpets. Lead, arsenic, pesticides, and flame retardants called PBDEs are all found in indoor dust. Children can be exposed to these toxic chemicals when they play on the floor or suck on their hands, feet, and other objects.



Adults, especially young women and pregnant women, need to be careful around toxic chemicals, too.

Some toxics are stored in the body and build up over time. When a woman becomes pregnant, these chemicals may affect the brain and health of her developing baby.

The environmental health divisions of your local and state health departments are working to provide the information you need to prevent exposure to toxic chemicals. The advice in this brochure is meant to protect children from toxics. For more information on ways to reduce exposure, see the resources listed on the back.

* Toxics are poisons or substances that are poisonous.

Keep Toxics Out of Your ENVIRONMENT

Choose Low-Odor Paint and Natural Materials.

Remodeling work, such as demolition, scraping, painting, and carpeting, can add harmful pollutants to your home. During remodeling activities, air out the space and keep children away. Choose paints and materials with no or low levels of solvents.



Safely Dispose of Toxic Household Products.

Many pesticides, paints, and solvents are bad for the environment. Some thermometers, fluorescent light bulbs, and other common items contain mercury. Do not throw them away in your garbage. Contact the Recycling Hotline at 1-800-RECYCLE (1-800-732-9253) to find a hazardous waste disposal facility near you.

Prevent Pollution.

There is no better way to protect children than by keeping toxics out of homes, foods, and consumer products. Choose products carefully and recycle what you can. Learn about programs and policies in your community that prevent pollution.

Keep Toxics Out of Your HOME

Keep Your Home and Car Smoke-Free.

Secondhand smoke exposure causes asthma in children and is also linked to increased rates of pneumonia and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Call 1-877-270-STOP or visit www.quitline.com for help to quit smoking.



Wipe Your Feet and Leave Shoes at the Door.

Dirty shoes carry in germs, lead, arsenic, and pesticides from outside. Get in the habit of taking off your shoes or wiping them on a mat when you come inside. It costs no money, saves cleaning time, and lowers the amount of toxics in your home.

Reduce Dust in Your Home.

House dust may contain many toxic chemicals, including lead, arsenic, pesticides, and PBDE flame retardants. Use a damp cloth or micro-fiber tissue to dust each week. Air out the room and take care not to stir up dust while you vacuum and clean. Replace vacuum filters when needed. Take the vacuum cleaner outside to replace filters or parts. Wash your hands after cleaning and dusting.

Keep Toxics Out of Your YARD

Avoid Using Bug Killers and "Weed and Feed" Fertilizers.

Studies show higher levels of pesticides in children whose families use weed or bug killers. There are non-toxic solutions to many weed and pest problems. Ask your local nursery for tips on non-toxic solutions. You can also ask Washington State University Extension Master Gardeners at <http://gardening.wsu.edu/stewardship> or call 1-877-987-6448.



Cover Bare Dirt.

Dirt can contain lead, arsenic, and pesticides. Cover bare dirt in your yard with grass, gravel, mulch, or plants to protect children.

Choose the Least Toxic Products.

Cleansers, paints, bug sprays, and bug bombs can cause health problems if they are misused. Read the label and avoid products with the words "Danger" or "Poison." Follow label directions, and keep out of the reach of children.

Keep Toxics Out of YOU!

Wash Hands Well and Often.

Washing hands with soap and water gets rid of germs, as well as lead, arsenic, pesticides, and other toxics you or your child may have touched.



Wash Fruits, Vegetables, and Toys.

Scrub fruits and vegetables to remove all dirt and residue. Wash pacifiers and toys to keep them clean and free of toxics.

Eat Seafood Low in Mercury.

Some fish have less mercury than others. Good choices are salmon, flounder, cod, trout, pollock, catfish, clams, shrimp, and canned "light" tuna. Canned "light" tuna has much less mercury than canned "white" albacore tuna. Women who are pregnant or might become pregnant, nursing mothers, and young children should be careful and not eat fish with high levels of mercury. Shark, swordfish, tilefish, king mackerel, and tuna steak should not be eaten. For more information, go to www.doh.wa.gov/fish or call 1-877-485-7316.

Choose Organic Food When Possible.

It is healthier to choose organic foods for items you and your children eat a lot, especially foods that are high in animal fat, such as dairy products and meats. Eating organic foods will reduce your exposure to pesticides.