

The following information was adapted from <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2006/10/toxic-people/multimedia-interactive>



Your Toxic Home

- Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs): While the term “unavoidable” may not sound very reassuring, awareness is key when dealing with these pesky toxins. PBDEs can be found in common kitchen appliances, such as coffeemakers, blenders, toasters and microwaves. Some fabrics, foam mattresses and electronics may even harbor the pollutant.
- Phthalates: This innovation of the consumer world may be doing more harm than good. The same substance that gives pliability to vinyl, plastic wrap and lotions releases toxins that might contribute to make sexual deficiency. Phthalates can also be found in nail polish, shower curtains, garden hoses and extension cords with PVC.
- Pesticides: A recent rise in the popularity of organic foods has caused “pesticides” to become a dirty word. When organic food prices just don’t fit the family budget, make sure to wash produce thoroughly. When dealing with weeds or hungry bugs in your yard, opt for more natural methods of weed and pest control. HGTV.com gives some great pointers for organic gardening. Pesticides can also be found on pet flea collars and in antimicrobial soaps.
- Perfluorooctane acids (PFAs): Found in nonstick pans, PFAs may cause cancer. While its carcinogenic qualities have not been fully researched, nothing good can be said about a substance that takes *years* for the body to eliminate. Instead of the ever-popular nonstick pans, try going back to basics with cast iron cookware. Some furniture fabrics and even microwaveable popcorn bags can carry PFAs.
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs): Once used as a coolant and insulator in electrical systems, the now banned toxin is known to cause liver damage and even cancer. It left a lasting impression, however, as the now banned substance can be found in contaminated fish and game.
- Dioxins: A consequence of industrial events and fires, dioxins collect in plant and animal fats in the same way PCBs do. Avoid fatty meats, dairy products, fish and areas that have been contaminated.
- Bisphenols: Interestingly enough, this toxin is actually a synthetic form of estrogen. Found in many hard plastic bottles (including baby bottles) and the inner lining of some food cans, reproductive damage may be done over time.
- Metals: Lead, mercury and arsenic are all known to cause a range of health problems – from mental deficiencies to death. Respectively, old paint, tuna and pressure-treated woodwork actually harbor these hazardous metals. Buying lead-free paint, eating mercury-containing foods in moderation and eliminating pressure-treated wood should help.