

# How to Reduce Toxic Chemicals in your Home

Chemicals are part of our lives. We treat illnesses, paint our houses, and even clothe ourselves with products that have been developed through chemical research. However, there are reasons to be cautious about our exposure to some chemicals.

From the foods we eat to how we maintain our yards and clean our homes, we can be exposed to chemicals in many ways. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), only a fraction of the more than 75,000 registered chemicals have gone through complete testing for human health concerns. Some chemicals have immediate toxic effects. Others are toxic to our bodies only after repeated, long-term exposure.

Simple changes in our everyday routines can reduce our long-term exposures to low levels of potentially harmful substances. Changes in how we choose the products we buy, or the ways we clean our houses and take care of the yard. These changes will not only make our homes safer, they may also save us money.

Why not consider these helpful ideas for reducing toxic exposures in your home.

- Wisely select products (cleaners, shampoos, etc.) made from plant-based materials, such as oils made from citrus, seed, vegetable or pine. By doing so, you are selecting products that are biodegradable and generally less toxic. These products also provide the additional benefit of being made from renewable resources.
- Always choose pump spray containers instead of aerosols. Pressurized aerosol products often produce a finer mist that is more easily inhaled. Aerosols also put unnecessary volatile organic chemicals into your indoor air when you use them.
- Antibacterial agents, while not directly harmful to you, contribute to the growing problem we face when bacteria mutate to strains that are more drug-resistant. Instead of adding to the growing problem, try to avoid using antibacterial soaps. But remember that hand washing with any soap is still vital to maintaining good health. If your doctor recommends using antibacterial soap, you may need to consult her first.
- Only use a mercury-free fever thermometer. Broken mercury fever thermometers can be a source of toxic mercury levels in your home and discarded products containing mercury contribute to higher levels in the environment. You can bring your mercury-containing items to one of our household hazardous waste Cleansweep events.
- A good principle to follow is always to look for ways to reduce or eliminate the use of toxic chemicals as we go about our daily lives, to keep our homes safe for our children, our pets, and us. Questions? Call Jen at 715-635-2197. Click here to view the [Greener Cleaning Guide](#).