

Hormone Disruptors: Reduce the Risk of Chemical Exposure

Consumer products that may contain Hormone Disrupting Chemicals include:

- **Household Cleansers** such as floor wax, dish soap, scouring powder, detergents
- **Personal Care Products** like shampoos, anti-bacterial soaps, lotions, deodorants
- **Upholstery Foam**, textiles, electronics that may contain flame retardants
- **Plastic** items including dishes, cling wraps, toys, furniture, clothing
- **Food** containing certain additives, metals or pesticide residues, as well as some food packaging and can linings
- **Medicines**—both prescription and over-the-counter

www.ecosuperior.org/EDC

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Scientists have found 870 different chemical ingredients that have the potential to affect the hormone system, even at very low doses¹. These chemicals are found in many different everyday products, and in some foods.

Reducing your exposure to chemicals is good for you, and good for the environment. Many of the products we use every day are made of combinations of chemicals, and some can be harmful. Certain chemicals can trigger allergies or promote cancer in some people, while others can affect the hormone system of humans, fish and wildlife. Chemicals that affect hormone systems are called endocrine disrupting chemicals or hormone disruptors.

The hormone (endocrine) system directs growth, reproduction and other body functions such as brain development, immune system function and weight regulation. Very low doses of hormone disruptors can mimic, block or alter hormone signals, changing the way our bodies work and potentially leading to health problems such as:

- Reproductive problems (reduced fertility, increased miscarriages, deformities of reproductive organs, skewed sex ratios)
- Problems with brain and nervous system function
- Increased obesity and diabetes
- Learning disabilities and changes in behaviour
- Impaired immune systems.

Although adults may show no ill effects from exposure to hormone disruptors, they can pass contaminants on to their babies during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Babies in the womb and children are most likely to be affected due to their rapid growth and development, which is controlled by the hormone system. The wide range of reproductive, developmental, growth and behavioural problems can last a lifetime.

¹<http://www.endocrinedisruption.com/endocrine.TEDXList.overview.php> From The Endocrine Disruption Exchange (TEDX) List Of Potential Endocrine Disruptors database.

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TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE

Environmental Impact

Many of the chemicals we use in our consumer products do not easily break down, or sometimes break down into more harmful products that pollute water, soil, and wildlife. Even at the low doses found in the environment, some of these chemicals affect the hormone systems of animals. Many of the reproductive, developmental, growth and behavioural changes resulting from exposure to hormone disruptors were first noticed in fish and wildlife.



RESOURCES

Pick up factsheets about the following topics at our office, or download them from ecosuperior.org/EDC

- Housecleaning Without Harm
- Choosing Safer Personal Care Products
- Avoiding Flame Retardants
- Get Drastic with Plastic *and* Smart Plastics Guide

Choose greener cleaners—Traditional household cleaners often contain toxic chemicals that can affect your health and our waterways. Use common household ingredients such as baking soda and vinegar to make your own non-toxic cleansers.

Choose safer personal care products—Even if the label says a product is “gentle” or “natural,” it may not be the safest choice. Read the ingredients on the label and find out how safe they are at ewg.org/skindeep

Keep your house as dust-free as possible—Remove the dust from your home often, using a damp cloth or a HEPA vacuum. Household dust may contain fine particles of chemicals from things like flame retardants found in foam cushions and mattresses, textiles, or electronics.

Reduce the plastics in your life—Plastics are made using non-renewable energy and clean water, then are thrown away or recycled into low grade products. Toxic chemicals from plastic containers may seep into our food. Use glass, ceramic, wood or stainless steel alternatives when you can. Learn to choose safer plastics at getdrasticwithplastic.org

Minimize your exposure to chemicals in food and packaging—Whenever possible, choose unprocessed and organic foods to reduce exposure to harmful food additives and pesticide residues, and choose fresh or frozen foods over canned when possible to minimize your exposure to the plastic lining found in cans. Find the food with the fewest pesticides at FoodNews.org

Return unused medicines—including over-the-counter drugs—to your pharmacy. Never flush them down the toilet or throw them down the sink because the drugs will harm fish and other creatures living in streams and lakes.

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