

Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy

A child's most critical development occurs while in the womb. This is a time when a mother must take proactive steps against harmful toxins. The first step is being aware of where they exist and how to avoid them. Follow these tips for a happier and healthier pregnancy!

Food and Food Preparation:

- Fish is some of the healthiest food you can eat, but it's important to choose wisely.

Avoid fish high in mercury: King mackerel, marlin, shark, swordfish, tilefish, tuna steak, striped wild bass, alewife, bluefish, shad, imported wild sturgeon, or weakfish.

Choose the following fish lower in mercury: Wild salmon, sardines, anchovies, Atlantic herring, Dungeness crab, Pacific cod, Alaskan black cod, farmed striped bass, tilapia, farmed catfish, clams, mussels, and Pacific oysters.

- Eat organic food as much as possible, especially when choosing foods found to be most contaminated with pesticides: peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, grapes (imported), spinach, lettuce, and potatoes.
- **Avoid** canned foods as much as possible. Linings in cans may leach bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical that mimics estrogen. Eden Organic offers canned food with BPA-free linings.
- **Choose** low-fat meat and dairy products, since many chemicals build up in fat.
- **Avoid** clear water bottles (in any color) that are labeled #7 on the bottom. These bottles are typically made of polycarbonate, which may leach bisphenol A. Choose water bottles made of uncoated stainless steel or cloudy plastic instead.
- When reheating food, opt for containers labeled as microwave-safe such as those made of glass or ceramic materials. Try using parchment paper, wax paper, or white paper towels to cover containers rather than plastic wrap.
- **Avoid** non-stick or Teflon-coated cookware, which may release toxic compounds. Choose stainless steel, glass, cast iron, or ceramic cookware instead.
- **Avoid** microwave popcorn. The inside of the bag is often coated with toxic chemicals that may leach into the popcorn. Avoid fast foods, as fast-food containers may be lined with "Teflon chemicals."

Personal care:

- **Choose** fragrance-free personal care products, and consider giving up perfumes, nail polish, and hair dye, which may contain harmful chemicals.
- **Choose** cosmetics and personal products from companies committed to safer products, like Burt's Bees, Avalon, Aubrey Organics, and California Baby.
- **Avoid** hand soaps marketed as 'antibacterial': scrubbing hands with hot water and plain soap is just as effective, and the overuse of antibacterial products can lead to germs that are harder to kill.
- **Avoid** clothing, shoes, and boots made with vinyl/PVC. If you can, also avoid those treated with Gore-Tex or other "Teflon chemicals." **Choose** rubber and vinyl-free fabrics such as nylon and polyester.

Pest control:

- **Avoid** bug killers, weed killers, and other pesticides in the home or garden. Focus on preventive techniques, and learn about easy non-toxic at www.watoxics.org.

Cleaning:

- Try green cleaning recipes using liquid soap, baking soda, and vinegar, or these safer brands: Seventh Generation, Bi-O-Kleen, and Country Save.
- Leave shoes at the door and try to vacuum once a week. Toxic chemicals from both indoors and outdoors can build up in household dust.

5 Steps to a Healthy Nursery or Child's Room

You can create a haven for your new addition built with love as well as safe materials. By avoiding toxic paint and furnishings, you can feel more at ease knowing your family is safe. Keep these tips in mind when remodeling or putting together your nursery:

- 1 If you are painting, choose zero-VOC or low-VOC latex (water-based) paints and stains.**
- 2 Be very careful with old lead paint when remodeling.**
Hire a contractor certified in lead abatement to remove it for you. A list of contractors in Washington is available from the Department of Commerce.
- 3 Avoid carpeting if possible.** Solid wood, bamboo, cork, and linoleum (such as Marmoleum™) are the healthiest flooring choices. If you prefer something soft on the floor, consider area rugs or carpets that are made and installed without glues.
- 4 Choose wood and metal blinds instead of vinyl blinds.**
Avoid plastic roller shades and wallpaper, which are typically made of vinyl (PVC).
- 5 Think twice when choosing mattresses and furniture.**
Wool, cotton, or latex mattresses are best. Solid wood is always a safe choice for furniture. Be sure to avoid upholstered furniture that contains formaldehyde-based glues or toxic flame retardants (PBDEs).