

Chemicals to Watch Out For

Chemical group	Environment and health
Pesticides <i>Example: chlordane</i>	<p>Sources include disinfectants, weed and bug killers used in or near the home, and drift from commercial and agricultural activities.</p> <p>Can cause many types of health effects, including effects on brain- and reproductive-system development and function, hormone systems, ability to fight disease, cancer, and kidney and liver function.</p>
Phthalates <i>Example: dibutyl phthalate</i>	<p>Can be found in vinyl and other plastics, such as children's toys; and also in nail polish, hair spray, and other cosmetics.</p> <p>Have been shown to affect hormone systems and cause reproductive harm, especially from exposure during pregnancy.</p>
Flame Retardants <i>Example: PBDE 47</i>	<p>Can be found in children's sleepwear, foam furniture and cushions, mattresses and pillows, synthetic carpets and drapes, and electronic equipment (TVs, computers).</p> <p>Have been shown to affect hormone systems and thyroid hormones and cause reproductive harm and effects on learning and behavior in animal studies.</p>
PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) <i>Example: PCB 52</i>	<p>Sources include older electrical equipment and building materials such as caulks and paints. Banned from new uses in the 1970s but still commonly detected indoors and out.</p> <p>Can cause effects on brain development, thyroid hormones, reduced ability to fight disease, hormone disruption, liver damage, and cancer.</p>
PAHs (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) <i>Example: benzo(a)pyrene</i>	<p>Sources include combustion from fireplaces, stoves and heaters, cigarette smoke, outdoor air pollution, and auto exhaust.</p> <p>Can cause cancer, reproductive harm, and reduced ability to fight disease.</p>

Alkylphenols	Can be found in detergents, plastic, and pesticide mixtures.
<i>Example:</i> nonylphenol	Have been shown to affect hormone systems and cause reproductive harm in animal studies.
Other phenols	Can be found in polycarbonate plastic, other plastics, disinfectants, fungicides, and food preservatives.
<i>Examples:</i> bisphenol A o-phenylphenol	Have been shown to affect hormone systems and cause reproductive harm in animal studies.
Parabens	Can be found in cosmetics and skin lotions.
<i>Example:</i> methylparaben	Have been shown to affect hormone systems in animal studies.
Metals	Sources include industrial emissions, engines, mining, cigarette smoke, and natural processes.
<i>Examples:</i> nickel, lead, vanadium	Can cause many types of health effects, including effects on brain development and functioning, blood pressure, lung irritation, and kidney and liver function.
Particulate matter	Sources include engines, refinery flaring, frying foods, cigarette smoke, and dust.
<i>Examples:</i> soot, PM2.5	Can aggravate asthma and cause breathing and heart problems, resulting in increased death rates.
Ammonia	Sources include industrial emissions, fertilizers, cleaning products, and natural processes.
	Can cause breathing problems and irritation of skin and eyes.

HOW CAN CHEMICALS GET IN MY BODY? Chemicals can enter your body when you breathe, eat, and drink, and through your skin. Chemicals can also be passed from mothers to infants through the placenta and breast milk.

From handout prepared by Silent Spring Institute, Brown University, Communities for a Better Environment, and University of California Berkeley