

# Avoiding Toxics Everyday

## Top 5 Tips from Toxic Free NC

Flame retardants, pesticides, BPA... the products we buy are full of low levels of a stunning array of toxic chemicals. Here are our top tips for avoiding them:

### 1. Wash your hands.

Seems too simple, right? Many of the chemical nasties we're concerned about (like flame retardants and pesticides) stick around indoors because there's no wind and rain to help them break down. Instead they build up in your house dust. That means you're exposed to them over and over again, all day long, as you touch the stuff in your house, breathe, eat and drink. So wash your hands! And furthermore: Use plain old soap and water! Antibacterial soaps use a toxic chemical ingredient called Triclosan or Triclocarban. Both are pesticides, and both break down into extremely toxic components in our water system. Simple soap and water is just as effective at killing germs as antibacterial soaps – and much safer for our environment & our health.



### 2. Avoid pesticides: Eat organic food whenever you can.

Organic food is grown without the chemical pesticides and fertilizers that are widespread in "conventional" agriculture. That means many of the foods we love are contaminated with low levels of pesticides that have not been proven safe for children, pregnant women, or folks with health conditions. Toxic Free NC can help you find organic food without breaking the bank. Check out our popular fact sheet, "Organic on a Budget," for great strategies and to find out which of your favorite produce items are highest and lowest in pesticides.

<http://bit.ly/OGbudget>

### 3. Don't use pesticides in your home and garden.

You can have a beautiful lawn and garden without toxic chemicals. It's better for you and for the bees and butterflies! Learn all about organic gardening on our website: [www.ToxicFreeNC.org](http://www.ToxicFreeNC.org).

Worried about creepy crawlies in the house? We have smarter strategies to keep the pests *and* the nasty pesticides out of your house at [www.ToxicFreeNC.org](http://www.ToxicFreeNC.org).

#### **4. Avoid plastic. Period.**

Don't be fooled by the "BPA free" marketing slogan on the package. Just because a company has removed one toxic ingredient from its formula, does not prevent it from using another nasty chemical in its place. Keep your food, water & beverages in glass and stainless steel. Recycled jars make terrific (and free!) replacements for plastic food storage containers. Seek out wooden and cloth toys for your children & grandchildren. Breaking up with plastic isn't easy, so take it one step at a time. But it's worth the effort.

#### **5. Cosmetics**

Guys, don't skip this one. The average American man uses six personal care products a day containing more than 80 unique chemicals. Women use even more! Lotions, after shaves, shampoos and makeup often contain chemical ingredients linked to cancer, birth defects, learning disabilities and other chronic health problems. Here are some quick & dirty tips to keep your cosmetics clean:

- Avoid fragrance. "Fragrance" is a catch-all term that can mask many secret, toxic ingredients. Go for "unscented" and "fragrance free" products.
- Avoid powders and aerosols, especially with kids.
- Skip the antibacterials. Even toothpastes can contain Triclosan and Triclocarban.
- Phthalates, Parabens, Tolulene, Formaldehyde, 1,4 Dioxane.

Want to know more about the specific products you love? See how they score on the Cosmetics Safety Database at [www.ewg.org/skindeep](http://www.ewg.org/skindeep)

#### **BONUS #6: Speak Out!**

Perhaps the most powerful thing we can do to get rid of everyday toxics is change the law. Our current federal toxics law has allowed more than 80,000 chemical ingredients into the marketplace with virtually no safety testing.

**Speak up!** Let your representatives in Congress, and in the NC House & Senate know that we need real toxics reform now! Find out more at [www.ToxicFreeNC.org](http://www.ToxicFreeNC.org)