



# Toxic-Free Child Program Instructor Guide

Use with brochure: “Healthy Kids: Protecting Your Child from Toxic Exposures,”  
available in English and Spanish

## OVERVIEW

Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility’s Toxic-Free Child program offers practical tips to pregnant women and young families to avoid toxic substances in the home. It is important to maintain a positive message with this class content, and not to rely on fear or overstate threats to health. In this approach, potential health impacts of exposure to toxic substances are explained in easy-to-understand language.

## BACKGROUND

A toxic substance is any chemical or mixture that may be harmful to human health if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin.

In the home, potential toxic exposures include **lead, pesticides, and mercury** (in fish); these are **neurotoxic** and can harm a developing fetus or infant/young child’s brain and nervous system. Infants, babies, and young children are particularly vulnerable to exposure due to their developing brains and endocrine systems; along with their behavior, such as breathing faster and crawling on the floor. <http://www.psr.org/environment-and-health/confronting-toxics/vulnerable-populations.html>

**Endocrine-disruptors such as phthalates or BPA** in plastics or in personal care products like shampoo, nail polish, and cosmetics can cause “hormone confusion” in babies and young children.

**Flame retardants** in electronics and upholstered furniture have carcinogenic potential, may act as endocrine-disruptors, and may cause neurobehavioral effects.

A long overdue reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) occurred in 2016. Most chemicals in use today have not been tested for harm to human health. This reform act will begin that long-needed testing process.

Additional information can be obtained here: <https://www.epa.gov/tsca-inventory> and here <https://www.edf.org/health/policy/chemicals-policy-reform>.





## Table of Contents

# Toxic-Free Child Program Class Content

## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- Simple Actions at Home to Reduce Toxic Exposures
- Chemicals
- Some Chemicals Can Harm Us

### Sources

Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families

<http://saferchemicals.org/about/>

## IN YOUR HOME

- Dust / Wet Mopping
- Leaving Shoes at the Door
- Furniture and Flame Retardants
- Paint
- Smoking
- Cleaning Products
- Added Scents / Phthalates / Hormone Confusion
- Bugs / Pesticides
- Zika Virus / DEET
- Cats and Dogs
- Kids' Pajamas
- Safe Toys

### Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/parents.htm>


[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/general\\_facts/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm)

<https://www.cdc.gov/zika/prevention/prevent-mosquito-bites.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics: Pesticide Exposure in Children

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/e1757>





Environmental Working Group

<http://www.ewg.org/research/healthy-home-tips/tip-8-get-rid-toxic-dust>

Natural Resources Defense Council

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/9-ways-avoid-hormone-disrupting-chemicals>

Cleveland Clinic

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/12/can-wearing-fire-retardant-pajamas-affect-your-childs-health/>

University of California, San Francisco: Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment

[http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pdfs/pesticidesmatter\\_readable.pdf](http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pdfs/pesticidesmatter_readable.pdf)

American Heart Association: Toxic Secondhand Smoke

<http://newsroom.heart.org/news/protect-kids-from-toxic-secondhand-smoke-experts-urge>

## **IN YOUR KITCHEN**

- Pesticides on Produce
- Controlling Insects
- Reheating Food Safely in Microwave
- Fish and Mercury
- Soap

### **Sources**

Environmental Working Group

[https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty\\_dozen\\_list.php](https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty_dozen_list.php)

Natural Resources Defense Council

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/9-ways-avoid-hormone-disrupting-chemicals>

University of California, San Francisco: Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment

[http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pdfs/pesticidesmatter\\_readable.pdf](http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pdfs/pesticidesmatter_readable.pdf)

Food and Drug Administration: Eating Fish

<https://www.fda.gov/food/foodborneillnesscontaminants/metals/ucm393070.htm>

Printable handout

<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/Metals/UCM536321.pdf>



Physicians for Social Responsibility

<http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/triclosan-handout.pdf>

Environmental Working Group

<http://www.ewg.org/research/ewgs-guide-triclosan>

## **BEAUTY PRODUCTS**

- Fragrance-Free
- Short List of Ingredients
- Phthalates-Free and Sodium Laureth Sulfate-Free
- Nail Polish

### **Sources**

Environmental Working Group

<http://www.ewg.org/release/duke-ewg-study-finds-toxic-nail-polish-chemical-women-s-bodies>

Environmental Working Group: Cosmetics Database

<https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>

## **OUTSIDE**

- Air Pollution
- Ozone Action Days

### **Sources**

American Academy of Pediatrics: Ambient Air Pollution, Health Hazards to Children

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/114/6/1699>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

<https://www.epa.gov/ozone-pollution/health-effects-ozone-pollution>

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)

Today's Texas Air Quality Forecast:

[https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/forecast\\_today.html](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/forecast_today.html)

Sign up for Ozone Action Day alerts:

[https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/ozone\\_email.html](https://www.tceq.texas.gov/airquality/monops/ozone_email.html)

## **CONCLUSION**

Choices at Home and at the Grocery Store





## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find all Toxic-Free Child Program Resources on the Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility Website

<http://texaspsr.org/>

Pediatric Environmental Health Toolkit - Physicians for Social Responsibility, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units

<http://peht.ucsf.edu/index.php>

Wisconsin Environmental Health Network- Toxics

<https://www.wehnonline.org/products/>

My Safety Nest

<http://www.mysafetynest.org>

Mt. Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center, Icahn School of Medicine

<http://icahn.mssm.edu/about/departments/environmental-public-health/cehc>

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