

Reducing My Exposure to Environmental Chemicals

Steps we can take to reduce our exposure to environmental chemicals.

The health impacts of humans' exposure to environmental chemicals are complex and difficult to prove. Studies on the health impacts provide more information but presently we are still learning what can be considered 'safe' and what impacts various chemicals can have on the body. This is especially true for very low doses such as many of the chemicals found in this study. However, it is good to be cautious. The following are some good general approaches that can reduce our exposure to environmental chemicals:



TOBACCO SMOKE:

- Reduce your exposure to commercial tobacco smoke by not smoking or by keeping a smoke free environment in your home and vehicles. This can reduce the levels of many types of chemicals in your body.



NUTRITION, FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE:

- Maintain a healthy, well-balanced diet. This can reduce the absorption and effects of some environmental chemicals. Eat fewer highly processed, refined and overly packaged foods.
- Consume fish each week especially of the types which have lower mercury levels such as salmon, sardines, rainbow trout, whitefish and smaller sizes of pickerel, lake trout and northern pike.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before eating. This would include bush fruits especially if they were picked close to a gravel road or other human activity.
- Use non-toxic (not lead) shot for your shot-gun. Consider non-toxic bullets for your rifle. If you are cleaning game shot with lead bullets, be sure to clean the area around the bullet track well as quickly and thoroughly as possible.
- Wash your hands before eating.
- Use only cold tap water for drinking and cooking.
- When heating food in the microwave, use glass, ceramic and plastic containers and plastic wrap that are labelled as microwave safe.



REDUCING CONTACT WITH CHEMICALS:

- When entering the house, leave your shoes and boots by the door or wipe them off well to reduce outdoor chemicals in the soil from tracking in.
- Keep your dust to a minimum in your home by regularly cleaning your home.
- Follow directions when using cleaning products. Try to use as little pesticide and insecticide as you can, but if you need to, follow recommended safety precautions.
- Do not burn garbage or household waste and avoid inhaling the smoke if waste is being burned. Wash new materials such as clothes, sheets and towels before using them for the first time.
- Store paint, varnishes, and yard chemicals in their original containers and keep them outside the home.
- Store fuels and oils in proper containers. Make sure that these products and any machinery containing these products are properly stored outside of the home. Avoid inhaling fumes of kerosene, gasoline or other solvents.
- Reduce the need for insecticides use by maintaining the screens on windows, and reducing places near your home where mosquitoes lay eggs.
- Do not swim, bathe or fish near drainage sewers or industrial dump sites.

For more information visit:

Government of Canada

- [Environmental Health Guides for First Nations: Your health outdoors.](#)
- [Environmental Health Guide for First Nations: Your health at home.](#)
- [Environmental Health Guide for First Nations Youth: Live, play and learn. What you can do!](#)
- [Hazardcheck. Hazards in your environment. What you can do!](#)

Canadian Cancer Society: '[Know your environment](#)'

Dietitians of Canada: [Are organic foods better for my health?](#)

Saskatchewan Ministry of Health:

[Health benefits of eating fish and minimizing risk from mercury.](#)