



## Are Your Children Safe from Toxins?

October 1, 2019



In recent years, a number of studies describing an association between environmental toxins and adult heart disease, asthma, cancer, and other health conditions have made their way into the mainstream media. But how do toxins affect children? A study from the University of Alberta in Canada evaluated the effects of pollutants on children with congenital heart disease. Their study involved reviewing data from several metropolitan and rural areas between 2006 and 2011. The results of their research established an association between several toxins in air pollution and heart defects in children. Some of the pollutants studied included carbon monoxide, benzene, sulfur dioxide, toluene, and carbon disulfide, which are often associated with car exhaust and industrial manufacturing plants.



While engaging in my own research, I came across a scientific review article published in The Lancet entitled, "Neurobehavioral Effects of Developmental Toxicity." This article cited several studies that point to links between toxins and other childhood disorders, such as reduced mathematics achievement scores, increased ADHD, increased antisocial behavior, and lower overall IQ scores. More recently, another scientific review article, "Thyroid-disrupting Chemicals and Brain Development: An Update," published in Endocrine Connections in 2018 describes a link between pregnant women exposed to certain chemicals and neurological development during fetal growth. This study involved an analysis of several endocrine-disrupting substances including perchlorates, and phenols like BPA and triclosan. BPA can be found in some plastics, whereas triclosan, an antimicrobial agent, can be found in some toothpastes, trash bags, cutting boards, and cosmetics. Recently, the FDA has banned the use of triclosan in some products, but not all. Therefore, if a product is advertised as being antibacterial, antifungal, or antimicrobial, it might be wise to read the ingredients to make sure triclosan is not listed.

Many additional studies over the past 20 years have determined that a variety of toxins can affect children's health and cognitive development, both pre- and postnatally. As a naturopathic physician, when I hear a patient describe a "toxin" in their environment, my initial thought is to have that patient remove the toxin, and then have her/him undergo a liver cleanse to help support their body's natural detoxification pathways. However, liver cleanses are NOT recommended for children or pregnant women, nor are they recommended for people taking certain medications.

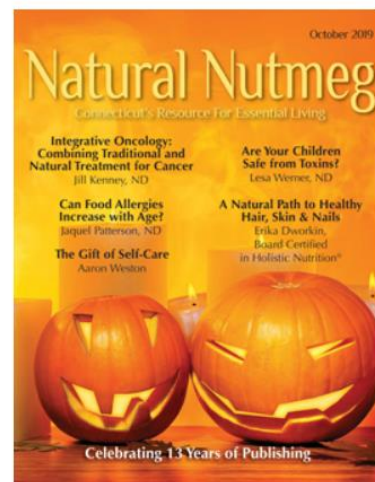
### How Do We Protect and Treat Our Children From Toxins?

There are several ways you can reduce toxin exposure in your home, and here's why you should undertake this task. By removing toxic substances from your environment, your liver has an opportunity to detoxify those chemicals naturally without constantly being bombarded with a never-ending stream of additional toxins.



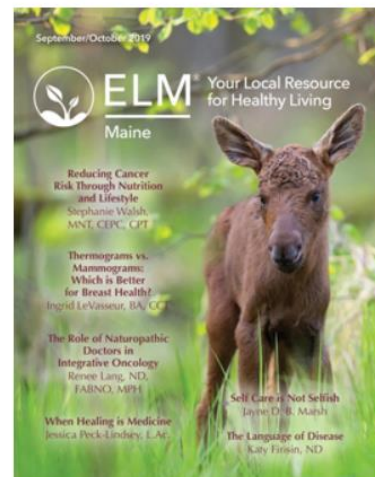
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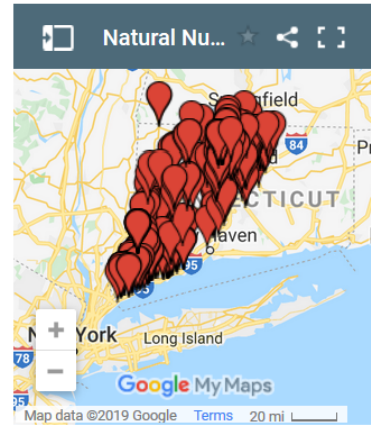
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Here are a few tips for reducing your toxic load:

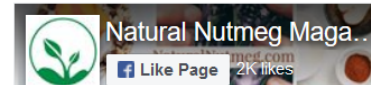
1. **Eat organic foods as much as possible.** Learn about the “Dirty Dozen,” and the “Clean 15” food lists at: <http://www.ewg.org/foodnews/summary/>. These lists describe the most and least contaminated foods currently offered in the marketplace.
2. **Reduce and ideally eliminate non-organic, packaged, and processed foods.** These products are usually loaded with chemical preservatives. Be sure to read all labels.
3. **Replace household and personal care items that contain toxic ingredients with those made with natural ingredients.** Household cleaning supplies have been linked to asthma, among other conditions, in several studies. There are many organic cleaning products, toothpastes, shampoos, sunscreens, and bug sprays available at most natural food markets and online.
4. **Toss out your fabric softener and dryer sheets.** They are loaded with chemicals known to cause neurological damage. There are many chemical-free alternatives available to keep your laundry fresh and static-free.
5. **Exercise.** One way to eliminate toxins is through sweating. Gentle exercise can help rid your body of toxins, so keep moving. But remember to check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program.
6. **Drink filtered water.**

While the list above is certainly not an exhaustive one, it's a good place to begin. Implementing a few simple changes in your household can go a long way in protecting your health and the health of your family. Lastly, since toxins can affect fetal development, our office recommends that women contemplating pregnancy make an appointment to be assessed for toxin exposure. Reducing this exposure before getting pregnant can go a long way in creating a healthier life for you and your children.

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