

Top 10 Things You Can Do To “Practice Prevention”

- 1) Buy non-toxic products for your home.** Many products that people use in their home surprisingly contain highly toxic materials. Fortunately, non-toxic alternatives for most of these products exist. Buy less toxic cleaning products. Avoid pesticides. Replace mercury thermometers with digital ones. For other specific suggestions and alternatives, see the “Practice Prevention” columns on www.iceh.org as well as other resources and fact sheets on www.watoxics.org and www.checnet.org.
- 2) Keep indoor environments healthy.** Pesticides and other toxic chemicals can be tracked in from the outdoors onto the floors where children play. Wipe shoes on doormats and leave them at the door. Also vacuum regularly with a HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filter vacuum. Old vacuums can blow contaminated dust from the carpet out into the air. Dust particles can be inhaled and ingested after settling on food, hands and furniture.
- 3) Don’t reheat or microwave foods in plastic containers.** Many plastics when heated leech toxins that can cause reproductive disorders and cancer and disrupt the hormone messaging system in the body. For further information and to find out which plastics appear to be safer, see: www.ecologycenter.org/ptf/toxins.html.
- 4) Eat lower on the food chain.** Many toxics bioaccumulate up the food chain and are stored in fatty tissues. Choose low-fat dairy, remove the fat from meats, and substitute grains, beans and vegetables whenever possible.
- 5) Buy organic and local.** Whenever possible, buy organic and locally grown foods. Organic foods are grown without highly hazardous pesticides and eating organic lowers your exposure to pesticides. Buying locally grown foods means you are supporting regional farmers and not using limited natural resources to truck or ship food in. Visit www.foodnews.org to learn more about organic, and www.seattletilth.org for more information about local options.
- 6) Dispose of household toxic products properly.** Many items in our homes - from paints to pesticides, batteries, and even energy-efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs - contain toxic ingredients. Be sure to dispose of these items properly, which generally means dropping them off at your local household hazardous waste site. See <http://1800recycle.wa.gov> for the site closest to you.
- 7) Become a member of an organization or volunteer with your favorite organization.** There are dozens of effective organizations working in Washington state to protect our health and environment. A little bit of money goes a long way for all of these groups. Visit www.esw.org for a listing of some of these organizations. In addition, every organization working to protect public health has a long list of things that it needs help with, from pulling invasive weeds to stuffing envelopes, from legal research to making phone calls. Contact your favorite organization and see what help they need. Volunteers make a huge difference.

- 8) **Educate yourself about the issues.** There is a vast amount of information available about toxic pollution and its impacts on human health and the environment. Take the time to read up on the issues and educate yourself. For the latest news, see www.environmentalhealthnews.org.
- 9) **Become a community organizer.** Many communities are no longer using pesticides on public parks and recreational areas and are asking school districts to use integrated pest management practices. For information about how you can take steps in your community, see www.beyondpesticides.org, www.watoxics.org and www.chej.org.
- 10) **Take action to eliminate persistent toxic chemicals including mercury, PCBs, dioxin, and PBDEs in Washington.** The state legislature is debating funding for a critical program to eliminate some of the most dangerous chemicals on the planet. Contact your legislators and urge them to support this program. See www.watoxics.org for more information.
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For more information, please visit www.iceh.org.