Sandy Worthington, MSN, WHNP-BC, CNM
Director, Medical Education and Training
Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.

Green Choices
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healthy people

living in healthy environments

in healthy families
Planned Parenthood supports the creation of a sustainable world by providing and advocating for voluntary programs that enhance the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all individuals worldwide.

Planned Parenthood recognizes that environmental contaminants have a significant negative impact on the genetic, sexual, and reproductive health of all women, men, children, and youth, as well as on developing pregnancies.

Planned Parenthood is committed to helping its clients, the general public, and legislators understand and eliminate these threats to human life and well-being.
Environmental health education is part of the Well Woman Exam
Advisory Group Identified Topics for Patient Information Sheets

- Lead
- Plastics
- Pesticides
- Cleaning products
- Smoke/secondhand smoke
- Cosmetics and personal care products
- Fish
- Fruits and vegetables
Environmental health toolkits sent to all PP health centers in April 2011

- **Over 200** health centers held lunch events to learn about environmental health and become familiar with contents of toolkit

- ~**2000** PP staff members attended events
Environmental Health Assessment Form

Every day we eat, drink, breathe, and touch chemicals that exist around us. This assessment will help you identify some of your exposures to common chemicals. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES and our staff will then give you the information you need to make choices for better health and a greener environment — for yourself, your family, and your community.

To be completed by staff: Staff name __________________________ Chart number __________________________

Name __________________________ Today’s date __________________________

1. Tell us about the food you eat.
   - Eat fish and/or seafood.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - Eat meat and/or poultry (chicken, turkey, etc.).  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - Eat fruits and/or vegetables.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - Eat organic fruits and vegetables.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never

2. Tell us about the things you or your family use when cooking, eating, or storing food.
   - (Or my family) microwave food in plastic containers or use plastic wrap.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - (Or my family) eat food that comes from a can (soups, beans, baby formula, etc.).  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - (Or my family) drink from plastic bottles or cups.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - (Or my family) store food in plastic.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - My take-out comes in plastic.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never

3. Tell us about the personal care products you use.
   - Use personal care products with fragrance (smell), like lotion or soap.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - Chemically straighten, relax, highlight, perm, or dye my hair (on head or body).  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never
   - Use cosmetics such as perfume/cologne, lipstick, nail polish, or mascara.  □ Regularly □ Sometimes □ Never

4. Tell us about where you live. (This can be your house, dorm, apartment, or other living quarters).
   - My home was built before 1978.  □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know
   - My home was tested for lead.  □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know
   - There is shower mold or mildew in my home.  □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know
   - There are working smoke detectors in my home.  □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know
   - There are working carbon monoxide detectors in my home.  □ Yes □ No □ I don’t know

Green Choices information is also online: www.plannedparenthood.org/greenchoices
Environmental Health Information Sheets
Spanish-language tools
Fruits & Vegetables

Every day we eat, drink, breathe, and touch chemicals that exist around us. The chemicals can affect our health. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES will give you the information you need to make choices for better health and a greener environment — for yourself, your family, and your community.

What do I need to know about fruits and vegetables?

- Eating fruits and vegetables is good for your health:
  - They contain many vitamins and nutrients.
  - They can lower your risk of getting cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.
  - Today, most fruits and vegetables have pesticides on them.

What should I know about pesticides?

- Most farmers use pesticides to grow fruits and vegetables.
- Pesticides are used to kill pests, including bugs, rodents, and weeds.
- They are made with thousands of chemicals that can be harmful to your health.
- Pesticides can disrupt hormones or cause cancer and other health problems.
- They can increase a child’s risk of having birth defects and learning disabilities.

What should I know about pesticides? (continued)

- How much harm may be done depends on
  - how harmful the pesticide is
  - how you come in contact with it — through your skin, breathing it in, or eating it
  - how long you are in contact with it
  - your age — fetuses and very young children are at the highest risk of harm
  - your genes (family history)
  - other pesticides and chemicals with which you’ve had contact
  - The government keeps watch over how pesticides are used, but we all still come in contact with many in fruits and vegetables.

How can I avoid pesticides in my food?

- Buy ORGANIC produce when you can.
- Some farmers grow food without using pesticides or other dangerous chemicals. This is called organic farming.
- Organic fruits and vegetables that meet government standards will have the USDA Organic label shown here:
  - The government guarantees that foods with this label are farmed without
    - pesticides
    - chemical fertilizers
    - sewage sludge
    - bioengineered seed or plants
  - Most of the time, if a fruit or vegetable is not labeled as organic, it is not organic.

Green Choices information is also online: www.plannedparenthood.org/greenchoices
Interactive Learning Modules
ARHP Clinical Proceedings
Stand-up poster and brochures for waiting areas
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How can your daily environment affect your reproductive health?

Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES provides the information you need to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals in your home and work environments. Ask your health care provider about how you can make Green Choices.
What are toxic chemicals?
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency defines a toxic substance as “any chemical or mixture that may be harmful to the environment and to human health if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin.” Some toxins are naturally produced by the environment and can be found in plants like wild mushrooms or berries. However, the toxic chemicals we live with every day are mostly manmade chemicals that were created in a lab.

Not all chemicals are harmful, but studies show that some can affect our hormones and can cause cancer, diabetes, and Parkinson’s disease. They can also cause learning disabilities, reproductive problems, and birth defects.

Who is affected by toxic chemicals?
Because toxic chemicals are found in household products and in our food, air, and water, these chemicals affect people of all ages in all places. Pregnant women, children, and infants are especially at risk. Women of childbearing age are also highly at risk because these chemicals can affect the future health of their children. People who work with toxic chemicals on a daily basis, such as farmers and nail salon workers, are also at a higher risk.

Where might I encounter toxic chemicals?
Toxic chemicals can be found all around us, often as part of our daily routines. Harmful pesticides can be found in fruits and vegetables; artificial growth hormones can be found in meat and dairy products; chemicals that can disrupt our endocrine system can be found in soap, shampoo, makeup, perfume, nail polish, and other personal care products. Plastics can also contain chemicals that can damage our health.

Knowing this can be overwhelming and scary. There are ways you can reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES can help guide you.

Why are we exposed to so many toxic chemicals?
The current U.S. law on chemical regulation is weak, outdated, and contains many loopholes. Today, there are more than 84,000 chemicals registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and most have not been carefully tested for safety.

The good news is that many organizations and individuals are working hard to update chemical laws to better protect our health, as well as the health of our environment.

How can I avoid toxic chemicals?
You can’t completely avoid them, but you can reduce your exposure. Planned Parenthood GREEN CHOICES will help identify your highest risk areas and provide tips on how to live in a less toxic environment. GREEN CHOICES can also tell you how to take action to make changes in your own community.

Talk to your health care provider, or go online to www.plannedparenthood.org/greenchoices to download environmental health information sheets. The information sheets cover the following topics:
- Fruits and vegetables
- Personal care products
- Fish
- Lead
- Cleaning products
- Tobacco smoke
- Plastics
- Pesticides

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Goodies for staff