

Phthalates: The everywhere chemical

Phthalates are used as binders and plasticizers in everyday items and found in so many places they are called the everywhere chemical

- Hidden behind 'fragrance' in cosmetics and personal care products like shampoo and soap as well as in other household products like cleaners and even in scented candles
- In foods (meats and cheeses) that have contact with plastics during processing or from certain commercial plastic food wraps
- Vinyl shower curtains release phthalates into the air from the heat of the water
- Children's vinyl rain coats and backpacks
- #3 plastics
- Medical tubing and even in some pills
- Vinyl flooring



Risks to health

Phthalates are considered to be pseudo-bioaccumulative. While they are not stored, they are so prevalent in the environment they are almost always present in our bodies. Phthalates exposure has been linked to a number of health issues.

- asthma
- attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder
- breast cancer
- obesity and type II diabetes
- low IQ
- neurodevelopmental issues
- behavioral issues
- autism spectrum disorders
- altered reproductive development
- low sperm counts
- genital deformities in baby boys



Toddlers and children are most susceptible because they explore their world with their hands and mouth. And because they have a longer lifespan, chemicals have longer to interact in their bodies.

What you can do

- Avoid chemicals when you are able
- Avoid products labeled with the word “fragrance”
- Don’t store or heat in plastic containers
- Avoid processed foods
- Eat less meat and dairy (also good for the climate)
- Choose restaurants that use fresh foods and buy local organic when available



What we can do together

- Join with organizations like PSR Maine working to change public health and chemical policy
- Support federal and state legislation (like Maine’s Kid-Safe Products Act) that regulates the use of and labeling for chemicals in products
- Support the Precautionary Principal that says that new products should not be introduced without knowing the risks first



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