Today, there are more than 80,000 chemicals on the market, many with known or suspected health effects.

We are all exposed to various toxic chemicals in our everyday life, but there are ways to limit that exposure. Here we provide some information on how to adjust your eating, living and purchasing habits to succeed in that goal.

Get in the habit of reading labels & learn about how chemicals affect our health.

Basic principles of environmental health and toxicology are presented in the free e-book, A Small Dose of Toxicology. More about all issues mentioned in here can be found on the Silent Spring Institute website http://www.silentspring.org.
Parabens

- Found in: cosmetic products, including makeup, moisturizers, hair care products, and shaving creams/gels

- Health Concerns: parabens can penetrate the skin, and can mimic the effects of estrogen in the body.

- What to look for on the label: butylparaben, ethylparaben, methylparaben, and propylparaben.

Phthalates

- Found in: color cosmetics, fragranced lotions, body washes and hair care products, nail polish and treatment

- Health Concerns: endocrine disrupting compounds that have been associated with cancer, impaired fertility, and male birth defects.

- What to look for on the label: dibutyl phthalate (DPB), diethyl phthalate (DEP), and diethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP).

What is fragrance?

- Defined by the FDA as a combination of chemicals that gives each perfume and cologne its distinct scent; often include chemicals that are allergy triggers or irritants. Phthalates often appear as an ingredient in fragranced products.

- Found in: sunscreen, shampoo, soap, body wash, deodorant, coal tars, body lotions, makeup, facial cream, skin toner, serums, exfoliating scrubs and gels, and perfume.

- Health Concerns: Dibutyl phthalate, which is used to keep nail polish from chipping, has been found to increase the likelihood that laboratory animals will give birth to offspring with birth defects.

- Select brands with the least toxic ingredients. Apply the polish and hairspray outside or in a well-ventilated area.

- Avoid wearing perfume and using other products with fragrance.

Other Personal Care Products

- Avoid products whose content labels list animal placenta, placental extract, estrogen, or other hormones.

- Look for personal care products marked "fragrance-free" instead of "unscented.

- Avoid nail polish and hairspray, as they often contain phthalates.

- Avoid sunscreen and hair care products containing UV filters. Common filters to avoid include benzophenone, oxybenzone, and octyl methoxycinnamate or octinoxate.

- Covering up with shade, hats, and clothing is best. When shading isn't possible, choose mineral-based filters like zinc oxide or titanium dioxide in non-nano form.

- If your water supply is highly chlorinated, consider a charcoal filter for your shower head.

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