

Is Your Home Causing Cancer?

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Even products that meet government standards aren't completely safe, and can contribute to a variety of ailments, including cancer, ADHD, and asthma. Here are some products to watch out for:

Foam containers are made of polystyrene, whose chemical ingredients can seep into food. Styrene has been blamed for skin, eye, and respiratory irritation, depression, fatigue, decreased kidney function, and central nervous system damage. Xenoestrogens like styrene are suspected hormone disruptors, meaning that they mimic estrogen in your body and disrupt normal hormone functioning.

The little **sheets that keep clothes fresh** contain benzyl acetate, which has been linked to pancreatic cancer. Another ingredient, limonene can form formaldehyde, a known carcinogen.

Baby bottles and other hard plastic bottles are commonly made from polycarbonate plastics. When washed and heated, these plastics give off bisphenol-a, or BPA. BPA is a hormone disruptor that has been tied to developmental and neurological problems for unborn children. In animals BPA has contributed to reproductive system abnormalities such as infertility, enlarged prostate, and abnormal chromosomes.

The majority of **home cleaning products** contain harmful ingredients like ammonia, lye, phosphate, and chlorine, as well as toxic ethylene-based glycol ethers and terpenes that become dangerous when they interact with ozone in the air. The single most important thing to remember about cleaning products is that you need good ventilation when using them.

A chemical analysis of 30 of the bestselling **scented household products** and found that they contained known carcinogens and other dangerous chemicals. A recent study more than two dozen volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, which the EPA says can cause nose and throat irritation, headaches, shortness of breath, nausea, and dizziness.

Polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the chemical in most **plastic soda bottles**, leeks the hormone-disrupting carcinogens called phthalates after repeated use. Deli plastic like polyvinyl chloride (PVC) can also release dioxins.

Color dyes have been linked to increased hyperactivity in children. Countless studies have produced evidence that dyes are an ADHD irritant.

Superglue and other super-strength adhesives can induce sensitization -- exposure can start with allergies and lead to asthma. Other hobby materials can be dangerous, too; people who deal with leaded toys, the chemicals involved in stained glass making and amateur metal refining should be careful.

Carpeting combines a lot of potentially unhealthy elements. The dyes and solvents used to produce and install it emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including styrene, xylene, butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT), and 4-Phenylcyclohexane (4-PC). Put together, these chemicals have caused respiratory and nervous system damage, as well as allergies, headaches, and nausea.

Particle board, fiberboard, plywood, paneling, and some insulation can emit formaldehyde, which the EPA calls a probable human carcinogen. These emissions can increase in humid summer months, and some people are more vulnerable than others.

Household bleach contains a concentrated form of chlorine. When people use chlorine bleach and an acid-based or ammonia-based cleaning product together, or even one after the other, they produce a chloramine gas that can be fatal. Short term effects of chlorine exposure include vomiting, difficulty breathing, coughing, and eye, ear, nose, and throat irritation.

The **flame retardants** used on upholstered furniture, mattresses, and electronic equipment have undoubtedly saved many lives, but there is a trade off. These polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs, have caused memory and learning problems in rats and mice, as well as slowing their thyroid function and neurological development.

Laser and ink-jet **printers** release volatile organic chemical emissions and ozone particulates, which have been linked to heart and lung disease after being inhaled.

Fragrances and other beauty and personal care products often contain the man-made chemicals called phthalates, or plasticizers, that have caused birth defects in male genitalia in animals and may cause lowered sperm count in boys and premature breast development in girls. These chemicals have been banned from baby toys, but not your perfume.

Nonstick and stain-resistant coatings include perfluorinated acids (PFAs). In animals, PFAs cause birth defects, thyroid hormone abnormalities, and liver damage.

Sources:

» [AOL January 2, 2009](#)

Reference website: <http://blogs.mercola.com/sites/vitalvotes/archive/2009/01/27/is-your-home-causing-cancer.aspx>

Trish's comments:

For other helpful tips, please go to our "[Top 20 List](#)". Number 20 has links to printouts of alternatives that you can use.

For alternative cleaning products, I personally use [NSP Concentrate](#).