

SAFEGUARD YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

# You Can Reduce Phthalates at Home

Phthalates are a group of chemicals used to make plastics more flexible and durable. They are also added to many personal care products to extend the life of scents in fragrances. Phthalates are found in hundreds of products including, but not limited to vinyl flooring, lubricating oils, shower curtains, toys, and some personal-care products like soaps, shampoos, hair sprays, lotions, air fresheners, and nail polish). Some phthalates are in polyvinyl chloride ("PVC") materials, which are used to make products such as plastic packaging, garden hoses, plastic pipes, wire and cable housings, and medical tubing ([CDC, 2023](#)).

## Exposure to Phthalates

People are exposed to phthalates in many ways, including through diet and contact with other household products. Phthalates can leach into food from vinyl plastic equipment and materials, food preparation gloves, and food packaging materials. Some exposure can occur from breathing phthalate particles in the air. Phthalates don't form strong bonds with materials they're used in. This means they can easily escape from products into the air and dust in our homes and into the environment. Children, in particular, touch things and then put their hands in their mouths. This behavior might expose them to greater phthalate particles compared to adults.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that nearly 90% of Americans have measurable levels of phthalates in their blood. Like PFAS, phthalates are found in a wide range of everyday and industrial products. Unlike PFAS, phthalates break down quickly in the body and the environment ([Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2023](#)).



## How Phthalates Affect Your Health

The full impact of phthalates on human health is not clear, but studies suggest that these chemicals are endocrine disruptors and interfere with hormone systems in the body. Chronic exposure to phthalates may negatively impact reproductive development, especially for sensitive populations like children and people of childbearing age. Some phthalates can also cause hormone disruption in wildlife and can be toxic to aquatic life.

## How You Can Reduce Phthalate Exposure

Though these chemicals have become ever-present, there are changes you can make in your daily routine to reduce your exposure.



### Make Small Changes in the Kitchen

- Try microwaving your food and liquids in glass containers, instead of plastic containers.
- Avoid plastic food containers and plastic wrap with the Recycling Label #3 on it.
- Store your food in glass, stainless steel containers, ceramic or other PFAS-free containers. Here is a [list](#) for alternatives to plastic.



### Read the Labels

- Steer clear of products that list phthalates or the words “fragrance”, “perfume” or “parfum” in their ingredients
- Seek out phthalate-free cosmetics found in the [Skin Deep®](#) product clearinghouse
- Look for products with [EPA Safer Choice](#), [Green Seal](#), and [Eco Logo](#) certification labels that are phthalate-free. These are safer choices!

### Seek out Safer Plastics

An easy way to recognize plastic toys, clothes, bottles food, etc. that may have phthalates is to look for the number 3 recycling icon on the plastic. Seek out plastics with the numbers 1, 2, 4 and 5. Avoid products with the number 3 label. Many companies create plastics that are phthalate-free.



### Additional Resources

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [National Institute Of Environmental Health Sciences](#)
- [U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#)
- [US EPA](#)

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# Reduce PFAS Chemicals at Home

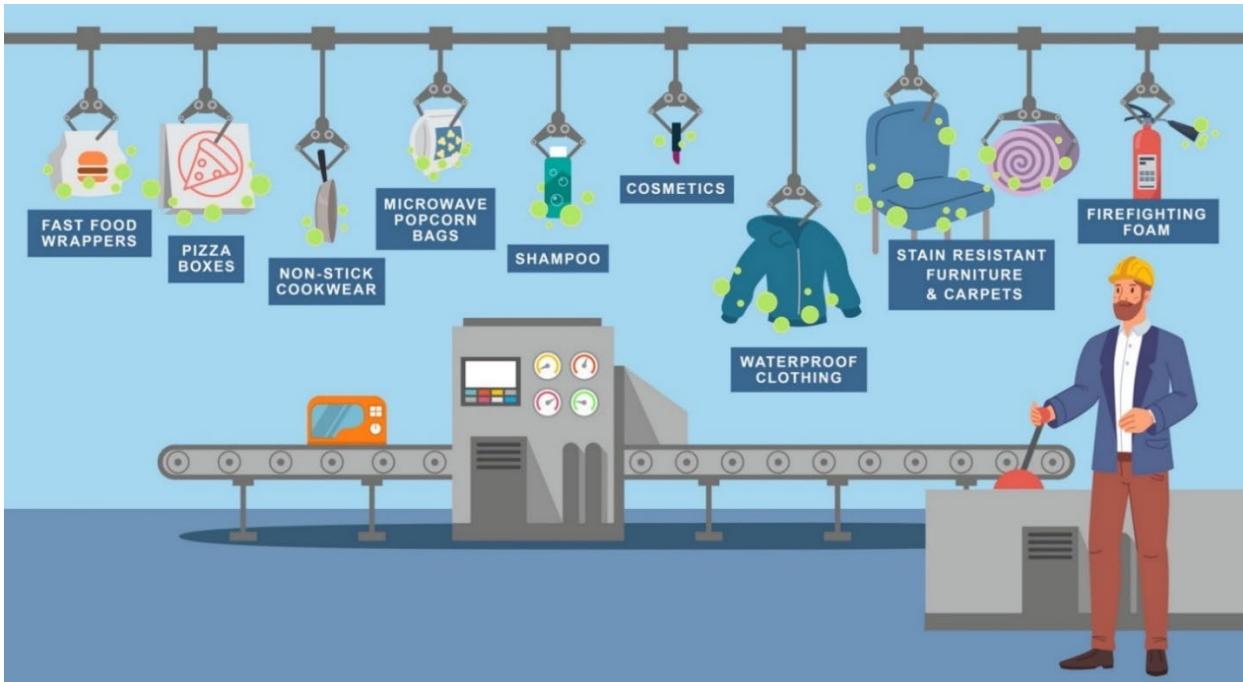
Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a family of synthetic chemicals commonly used to make products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. Because these chemicals are so widely used, they seep into our air, soil, and water. PFAS levels in the environment tend to be higher near places where industrial PFAS products are, or were, used or disposed of, such as landfills and military bases.

**Because PFAS chemicals don't easily break down, they can build up in people, animals, and the environment over time. Studies show 97% of Americans have some level of PFAS in their blood.**

## How PFAS Affects Your Health

Scientists are still studying how PFAS chemicals impact people and the environment. The [potential health effects of PFAS](#) may include increased liver enzymes, increased cholesterol levels, decreased vaccine response in kids, increased blood pressure levels or pre-eclampsia in pregnant people, lower infant birth weights, and higher risks for kidney and testicular cancer.

**The most effective way to eliminate or reduce PFAS exposure is for companies to stop including them in the products they make.** While it may not be possible to completely avoid PFAS chemicals, there are small changes you can make to reduce your exposure at home.





### Make Small Changes in the Kitchen

- Transfer take-out foods into glass, ceramic or other non-plastic containers before reheating them.
- Look for take-out food packaging that is certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI), or bring your own glass/ceramic container from home.
- Replace non-stick cookware with safer alternatives, such as cast-iron or enamel-coated cookware.



### Read the Labels

- Seek out “waterproof,” “water-resistant,” or “stain-resistant” clothing labeled as “PFAS-Free”. Check out these alternatives.
- Look for “PFAS-free” fabric protection sprays.
- Look for PFAS-free alternatives to dental floss, cosmetics, and other personal care products.
- Call or email manufacturers to see if they use PFAS chemicals.
- Choose household cleaning products with EPA Safer Choice, UL Eco-Logo, or Green Seal labels.



### Reducing PFAS in Our Region

- PFAS has been found in only a few small public drinking water systems in Oregon. Testing will continue, and results shared with the public.
- Local and state authorities are tracking emerging PFAS research and increasing environmental testing.
- The U.S. EPA and other agencies are working to better understand the risks of PFAS and how to reduce them.

### Additional Resources

- **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality** ([www.oregon.gov/deq/hazards-and-cleanup/toxicreduction/pages/pfas-in-oregon.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/deq/hazards-and-cleanup/toxicreduction/pages/pfas-in-oregon.aspx))
- **US EPA** ([www.epa.gov/pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas))
- **Environmental Working Group** ([ewg.org](http://ewg.org))
- **PFAS Central** (<https://pfascentral.org/>)