

# EWG's Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a critical time. A mother's chemical exposures can adversely affect her baby in many ways. Here are some simple but important steps you can take to reduce the risks during pregnancy - and beyond.

## 1 GO ORGANIC AND EAT FRESH FOODS

Use [EWG's Shoppers Guide to Pesticides](#) to determine which fruits and veggies you should always buy organic and those with the least pesticide residue that are ok to buy conventionally grown. Choose milk and meat produced without added growth hormones. Limit canned food, since can linings usually contain the synthetic estrogen called bisphenol A (BPA).

## 2 DRINK SAFER WATER

It's important for pregnant women to drink plenty of water. Use a reverse osmosis system or carbon filter pitcher to reduce your exposure to impurities such as chlorine, perchlorate and lead. Skip bottled water, which costs more and isn't necessarily better, and filter your tap water. If you're out and about, use a stainless steel, glass or BPA-free plastic reusable container. Mix infant formula with fluoride-free water. [Get EWG's Safe Drinking Water Guide](#).

## 3 EAT LOW-MERCURY SEAFOOD

Choose low-mercury fish such as salmon, tilapia and pollock, rather than high-mercury tuna and swordfish.



## 4 GET YOUR IODINE

Switch to iodized salt and talk to your doctor about taking iodine-containing vitamins. Iodine buffers against chemicals such as perchlorate that can disrupt your thyroid system and pose potential risks for your baby's brain development during pregnancy.

## 5 CHOOSE BETTER BODY CARE PRODUCTS

Just because the label says "gentle" or "natural" doesn't mean a product is safe for pregnancy. Look your products up on EWG's [Skin Deep Cosmetics Database](#). Read the ingredients and avoid triclosan, fragrance and oxybenzone.

## 6 WASH MATERNITY CLOTHES BEFORE WEARING

Clothing is often coated with chemical treatments in the factory.

## 7 IDENTIFY LEAD SOURCES AND AVOID THEM

Test your tap water for lead and avoid any home remodeling if your house was built before 1978, when lead house paint was banned. Dust from sanding old paint is a common source of lead exposure.



## 8 AVOID PAINTING

And other chemical-intensive jobs when you are getting your nursery ready.

## 9 CLEAN GREENER

Household cleaners, bug killers, pet treatments and air fresheners can contain hazardous chemicals. Check out less toxic alternatives. Some ideas: vinegar in place of bleach, baking soda to scrub your tiles, hydrogen peroxide to remove stains. Use a wet mop/rag and a HEPA-filter vacuum to get rid of dust -- which can contain contaminants. Leave shoes and the pollutants they track inside -- at the door.

## 10 AVOID GASOLINE FUMES

Ask for your partner's help to fill the gas tank, or use full service.

## 11 PICK PLASTICS CAREFULLY

Some plastics contain toxic chemicals, including BPA and phthalates. Don't reuse single-use containers or microwave food in plastic containers. Avoid PVC by hanging a natural-fabric shower curtain. When remodeling, go with PVC-free flooring and pipes. [Learn more about choosing safer plastics](#).

