



Rx for Prevention

- **Breastfeeding is Best** – for baby and mom. When possible, breastfeed. If you work outside the home, ask about ways to pump and store breast milk.
- **Go Digital.** Keep mercury out of your home and the garbage. Exchange your mercury thermometer for a digital one. Do not throw old thermometers in the trash – dispose of them at your community’s hazardous waste collection site or annual event, or call your local health department for more information on disposal.
- **No Smoking.** Help your child avoid tobacco smoke. It is linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and is dangerous for infants’ fragile lungs. Ask family members to smoke outside, away from doors and windows. Better yet, this is an excellent time to quit.

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- **Have a Healthy Home.** Keep your house well-ventilated, free of dust and tobacco smoke. Choose safer alternatives for cleaning and home renovation, such as water-based glues or paints, and citrus-based solvents. Avoid spraying pesticides in the home, garden, and on pets. Get rid of standing water that helps breed insects. Repair drips and holes. Clean up food crumbs and spills and put away all food that will attract unwanted insects or animals.
- **Don’t Get Burned.** Enjoy the sun safely. Protect your child from excessive sun exposure with hats and cover-ups. Use sunscreen (SPF 15 or higher) once your child is 6 months old. Do NOT use sunscreens combined with the pesticide DEET or other insect repellent. Watch for the “UV Index” that provides guidance on sun exposure, on local weather forecasts in your area. Children can get sunburned even on cloudy winter days.

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- **Learn how to protect your child from lead.** Any home built before 1978 may have lead paint. If you have lead paint in your home, make sure it is covered with a fresh coat of paint, wallpaper, tile etc. Never allow it to flake or peel. To reduce exposure to lead dust, wash your child’s hands after playing, and wash floors, window sills and other surfaces regularly. Never sand or remove lead paint yourself. If you must remove rather than cover, try to hire a contractor certified in lead abatement. Lead can leach from water pipes. If lead in the water is a problem in your area, or if you have lead water pipes in your home, run cold tap water in the morning for 1-2 minutes before using it.
- **What’s Under the Sink?** Not household chemicals or cleaning products! When childproofing the home, choose nontoxic cleaning products and be sure to store all chemicals and cleaning products up high in cabinets and out of the reach of young children. Avoid using cleaning products with ammonia or chlorine bleach (never use both together). Cheap and effective cleaners can be made at home from vinegar, lemon juice and baking soda.

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- **Fish is good for children, but...** some fish are higher in mercury. Children less than 15 yrs of age should not eat any fish high in mercury – such as swordfish, tilefish, shark, mackerel (king) or canned albacore “solid white” tuna. See local fish advisories to avoid freshwater fish or local fish higher in mercury. Fish lower in mercury include pollock or canned “chunk light” tuna.
- **Leave it at the Door.** Take off your shoes, which can track pesticides and toxic chemicals inside. Wipe shoes using a good doormat if you choose to keep shoes on.

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- **Play Safe.** Choose play areas not made with CCA (chromated copper arsenate) pressure-treated wood which can contain toxic chemicals. If children play on wood decks or playground equipment made with treated wood, wash their hands well afterward.
- **Have a Healthy Home.** Avoid using pesticides in your home, on your lawn or garden, or on pets. Keep pests out by sealing cracks around doors, windowsills, and baseboards. Prevent insect problems by quickly cleaning up food spills and crumbs, and eliminating standing water, a breeding ground for insects.

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- **Get active!** Encourage your child to exercise and play outside regularly, limit TV and computer time.
- **Healthy Eating.** Eat more naturally low fat, high fiber fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. Avoid meat and dairy products that are high in fat. Eat nuts and vegetable oils higher in "good fats."
- **Breathe Easy.** Keep your child from playing outdoors on days when the air quality is bad. Air quality forecasts are usually available in the newspaper or on the TV/radio news.
- **Don't use lice shampoo containing lindane.** Ask your doctor about safer alternatives.

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- **Healthy Pets.** Keep your child's "best friend" free of chemicals. Keep your pet and pet's bedding clean to keep away fleas. Choose less-toxic alternatives to flea collars or sprays on your pets.
- **Feast on Fruits and Vegetables.** Serve your child 5-6 portions a day of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet. Washing and peeling fruits and vegetables can remove some pesticides.
- **Get Mad at Mold.** Water damage can encourage mold growth and may cause respiratory problems in children. To avoid mold growth, fix water leaks right away and dry out the area completely. If carpets get soaking wet, remove and replace them. When possible, choose area rugs.

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- **Don't Smoke.** Tobacco is dangerous for your health.
- **Work and Play.** Avoid exposure to toxic chemicals at work or during hobbies (painting, model building, auto repair). Use nontoxic, water-based products. When toxic chemicals or solvents are used, avoid skin contact and ventilate well.
- **Turn it Down.** Loud music can harm your hearing. Turn the volume down on your headphones and give your ears a rest.
- **Sun Safety.** When in the sun, cover up and use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. Avoid tanning and tanning salons/booths.

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