

BMDA Cancer Risk Reduction at Home

Clean Your Home and Personal Items

Your home isn't safe or clean if you pollute the air inside with harsh chemicals. These can be found in household cleaning supplies. Below are a few tips to reduce your risk while cleaning.

- **Less is More**
 - Follow instructions on cleaning supplies to dilute. Only use what's needed to get the job done.
- **Ventilate**
 - Open windows when you clean so you don't trap air pollution inside.
 - If you dry clean your clothes, you can leave them outside uncovered for a few hours to help release chemicals.
- **Use Gloves**
 - Gloves protect you from harsh chemicals that may harm or burn the skin or eyes.
- **Do not Mix**
 - **Deadly gases are produced when you mix cleaners and/or chemicals.**

Cooking

Chemicals such as Bisphenol A (BPA) or Phthalate (DEHP) are often found in plastics and have been known to leach into foods and beverages from packaging. BPA and DEHP exposure have been linked to heart disease, diabetes, learning disabilities, obesity and increased risk of cancer. Dietary intake is a major source of BPA and DEHP exposure.

Reduce your risk by doing the following, when possible:

- Use glass instead of plastic containers when you heat foods
- Use a glass pitcher for juice or filtered water instead of plastic
- Use parchment paper to bake and wrap food instead of cellophane
- Choose frozen over canned foods which use BPA on the packaging or choose BPA free canned food
- Try to limit the use of Teflon, aluminum or other non-stick pots and pans. Stainless steel or cast iron is recommended.

Chemicals Found in Food Containers and Cookware

Chemical	Where found/Why harmful
Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)	Plastic #3. Considered the most dangerous plastic and contains phthalates. A known carcinogen.

Patient Education

Chemical	Where found/Why harmful
Polystyrene (Styrofoam)	Known as Plastic #6. A known carcinogen, leaching into food increased when contents of Styrofoam are hot, oily or acidic.
Bisphenol A (BPA)	Found in hard plastics (water bottles, canned foods, cash register receipts). High exposure linked to behavioral disorders, diabetes, and cancers of the reproductive system.
Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE)	Non-stick coating. Releases toxic fumes that can produce flu like symptoms.
Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)	Used in manufacture of Teflon. High exposure linked to mesothelioma, diabetes mellitus and chronic renal disease.

Resources

Keep your home safe to lower your cancer risk by Markham Heid. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. <https://www.mdanderson.org/publications/focused-on-health/FOH-home-safe.h13-1589835.html>

Adapted from Cancer Risk Reduction at Home. The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center ©2013. Reviewed 05/2024. Patient Education BMDA Reviewed & Revised 2/19/2025.