

# TOXIC FREE KIDS PROGRAM



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL CAMPAIGN INFORMATION SHEET

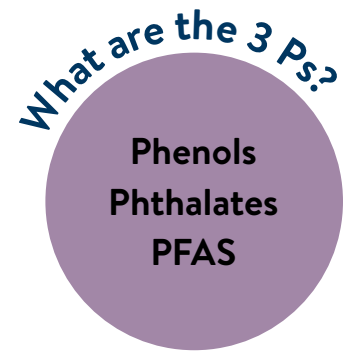
Back-to-School is a good time to consider purchasing and using safer products. The use of safer products is important because it can reduce your child's potential exposure to harmful chemicals. Exposure to certain chemicals can lead to potentially harmful effects.

### Chemical exposures may be an increased concern for young children:

- Children's hand-to-mouth activity puts them at increased risk of exposure to harmful chemicals that have leached out of household products and toys and end up in house dust.
- Children's bodies are smaller and still developing, so they are more vulnerable to negative health effects.
- Children drink, eat, and breathe more in relation to their body weight than adults do.
- Children's exposure to certain harmful chemicals can put them at potential risk of developmental delays.

### The 3 Ps are harmful chemicals to avoid

- **Phenols:** Many phenols are considered "endocrine disrupting" chemicals meaning that they can affect the body's natural hormones. Phenols can be found in products such as air fresheners, deodorizers, metal cans, and plastic containers. Bisphenol A is a health concern for kids and has potentially adverse health effects found in toxicology studies, including fetal and infant development, liver, kidney, and thyroid issues.
- **Phthalates:** Phthalates are a family of chemicals that are used to make plastics more flexible and durable. They also have uses in personal care products and a wide range of other product types. Phthalates are considered "endocrine disrupting" chemicals, meaning that they can affect the body's natural hormones. Phthalates can be found in plastics, shampoos, deodorant, lubricating oils, fragrances/perfumes, hair spray, and nail polish. Some health concerns of phthalates include birth defects, worsening of asthma symptoms, and eczema.
- **PFAS:** PFAS are a family of chemicals that have been widely used for decades. PFAS are extremely stable and do not break down in the environment. Some PFAS can build up and stay in the human body for many years but can also slowly decline if the exposure stops. The health impacts we are most concerned about for people from exposure to PFAS include effects on the immune system such as decreased vaccination response, changes in liver function such as higher cholesterol and elevated liver enzymes, and lower birth weight.



Minnesota is reducing PFAS pollution and exposure through laws that limit where PFAS can be used, including in food packaging, firefighting foam, and certain consumer products. Amara's Law, which took effect in 2025, bans PFAS in 11 product categories: including cookware, cosmetics, cleaning products, and textiles. This law will eliminate all nonessential uses of PFAS in products by 2032.

## Steps to reduce your exposure

- When replacing household items, consider products made without harmful chemicals. Some products may have an EPA Safer Choice label indicating a safe product. Read product labels to see if they are free of harmful chemicals and avoid products that may indicate PFAS use such as stain-resistant, water-resistant, or contain nonstick coatings.
- Vacuuming and regularly wiping surfaces with a damp cloth can help reduce household dust, which can contain harmful chemicals released as products wear down over time.
- Be sure to properly dispose of products containing harmful chemicals to help reduce future exposure and environmental releases.

## Additional resources

- [EPA | Children Are Not Little Adults \(https://www.epa.gov/children/children-are-not-little-adults\)](https://www.epa.gov/children/children-are-not-little-adults)
- [MDH | Reducing Exposures: Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\) \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/docs/pfassummary.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/docs/pfassummary.pdf)
- [MDH | Bisphenol A \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/childenvhealth/docs/bpa.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/childenvhealth/docs/bpa.pdf)
- [MDH | Phenols \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/biomonitoring/docs/enpheninfohkmn.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/biomonitoring/docs/enpheninfohkmn.pdf)
- [MDH | Phthalates \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/biomonitoring/docs/enphthinfohkmn.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/biomonitoring/docs/enphthinfohkmn.pdf)
- [MDH | Phthalates \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/childenvhealth/docs/phthalates2.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/childenvhealth/docs/phthalates2.pdf)
- [MPCA | 2025 PFAS prohibitions \(https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/2025-pfas-prohibitions\)](https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/2025-pfas-prohibitions)

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