

Checklist for a Healthy Home

Eco-Friendly Kitchen

Foods

☐ **Choose fresh, locally grown, and organic foods.**

Nobody wants to eat foods laden with chemicals from pesticides. Eat organic fruits and vegetables that are locally grown to reduce your exposure to pesticides and chemicals in your food. Try shopping for fresh produce at farmers' markets, farm stands, and food coops. Also consider buying milk and meat without added growth hormones.



☐ **Choose a "9" and you'll be fine.**

Check for numbered stickers on your fruits and vegetables. If they start with a number "9", your produce is organic, meaning it is grown free of pesticides.

☐ **Avoid canned foods.**

It is best to try to limit the amount of canned food one consumes. Can linings of canned food and even infant baby formula often contain bisphenol A (BPA) which is potentially cancer causing and a hormone disruptor.

Cookware, Dishes, & Food Storage

☐ **Skip non-stick pots and pans.**

Of course we all hate when food gets ruined as it sticks in the pot or pan. It is then when non-stick pots and pans seem like a good idea, but are they really?

"Non-stick" really means that the cookware contains perfluorochemical (PFCs), which are hazardous to your health, last forever in your body, and won't degrade in the environment. When overheated, non-stick cookware can emit toxic fumes potentially harmful to one's health. Try using stainless steel or cast iron cookware instead, especially when considering replacing those old pots and pans.

Are your non-sticks too new to get rid of? That's okay! In the meantime, just be sure that you don't heat them above 450 degrees Fahrenheit. When the non-stick coating begins to shed or peel, go with cast iron or stainless steel.

☐ **Rid your share of Tupperware.**

Food storage containers are fairly eco-friendly in that they cut down on the use of plastic wrap, aluminum foil, and other throw-away items. Food storage containers doesn't have to mean the plastic Tupperware we all grew up with. Avoid containers made of PVC (3), polycarbonate (7), or polystyrene (6). Plastic #7 can contain BPA and plastics made from petroleum and natural gas can accidentally release their chemicals when heated or melted in a microwave. Better storage options include glass and stainless steel containers. When microwaving, use glass or lead-free microwave safe ceramic containers. If such containers come with a plastic lid, remove the lid before microwaving.

If you don't want to rid your share of Tupperware just yet, be sure to use plastic storage containers with recycling symbols 1, 2, 4, or 5 and avoid heating them in the microwave (never heat in the oven).

□ Dish it out.

There are some dishes you just don't want to eat off of. While the FDA does regulate such things as lead and cadmium levels in dishes, they can't catch everything. As a conscious consumer (of dishes and the food you put on it), avoid toxic lead in your dinnerware. To reduce your risk of potential exposure, be sure to:

- Never store food in antique dishes.
- Avoid imported ceramic dishes.
- Never store liquids in lead crystal glasses or bottles.
- Do not drink from lead crystal bottles or cups.

It's better to dish it out on recycled glass dishes, plain glass dishes, stoneware, ceramic dishes made in the United States, sustainable wood dishes with non-toxic finishes, or stainless steel dishes.

Paper-plating it for your party or picnic? Choose recyclable and biodegradable disposable dishes if you must use throw-away plates, cups, etc.

Green Cleaning

□ Clean it green.

The best ways to avoid cleaning your kitchen with the thousands of potentially harmful chemicals that are ingredients in so many household cleaning products is to choose to clean with certified green cleaning supplies, which will have the Green Seal label or the EcoLogo – both independent green certification companies.

INSERT LOGOS

Want an even more natural clean?

Try using common household products (such as baking soda, lemon juice, white vinegar, and club soda) that can be just as effective. The Good Housekeeping Institute recommends vinegar and hydrogen peroxide, for example, as it kills 99% of bacteria, mold, and viruses (i.e. salmonella, E. coli).

Quick Recipe for Clean! Take two spray bottles, filling one with white vinegar and the other with hydrogen peroxide. Spray your counters cutting boards, alternating between the two spray bottles.

