

Breast Cancer UK campaigns to prevent breast cancer by reducing our exposure to the carcinogens and hazardous chemicals that are present in everyday products and environment.

Take action to prevent breast cancer at [www.breastcanceruk.org.uk](http://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk) or T: 0845 680 1322

This leaflet contains information about some of the chemicals and products to avoid and suggests some alternatives. It is not a complete listing. Information is correct at the time of publishing.

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**You can:** Choose organic and locally grown products. Avoid using pesticides. Try to deter and remove pests by other methods.

### Phthalates

**Where:** PVC plastics, inks, paints, perfumes and other fragranced products, nail varnish, disposable medical products, PVC flooring and window frames. Also in PET/PETE marked products, such as plastic water bottles.

**Why:** To soften plastics. To carry fragrances and denture alcohol in order to make it undrinkable.

**What's the problem?** An EDC linked to breast cancer. Toxic to reproductive, developmental and immune systems.

**Look out for:** Not required to be listed on labels. May be listed as DEHP. Some are banned in baby toys in the EU.

**You can:** Avoid PVC and plastics labelled No. 6 and No. 3 or refer to [www.wrap.org.uk/content/types-plastic](http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/types-plastic). Choose essential oil based fragrances and avoid strong smelling products, such as air fresheners and some washing and cleaning products.

### Synthetic musks

**Where:** Cosmetics, perfumes, aftershaves, laundry detergents and fabric softeners.

**Why:** As fragrances.

**What's the problem:** An EDC linked to breast cancer. All are bioaccumulative, some are carcinogenic.

**Look out for:** Not required to be listed on labels. Some are listed as 'parfum' or 'fragrance'.

**You can:** Avoid synthetic smelling cosmetics and cleaning products. Buy un-fragranced products. Open windows to freshen air.

### Triclosan

**Where:** Cosmetics products such as toothpaste, vaginal and hand washes. Added to consumer items such as socks and chopping boards.

**Why:** As an antibacterial.

**What's the problem:** An EDC linked to breast cancer. Bioaccumulative.

**Look out for:** Triclosan or Microban.

**You can:** Avoid products containing Triclosan.

# Are you being exposed?

Your handy guide to avoiding toxic chemicals in everyday products

**NO  
MORE  
BREAST  
CANCER**  
TACKLING AN ENVIRONMENTAL DISEASE

Become a savvy shopper and avoid some of the chemicals linked to breast cancer. As consumers we should be able to assume that everything on retailer's shelves are safe, but this is not the case.

Daily, we are exposed to numerous hazardous chemicals and toxic substances. Many are linked to cancer, reproductive and developmental disorders and are toxic to the immune system and brain. They can be absorbed into our bodies through breathing, drinking, eating and via our skin.

Many of the chemicals are released when products are manufactured, used and/or disposed of. We need better legislation to ensure a safe environment for us all to live, work and play in.

Environmental and occupational exposures to hazardous chemicals are an overlooked risk factor for breast cancer. Reducing your exposure will be an empowering step forward to avoiding this preventable disease.

## Hazardous chemicals and substances

Bioaccumulative substances build up in our bodies and the environment. They are stored in fat tissue and, over time, can reach toxic proportions. They are slow to be excreted from the body and remain harmful in the environment for a long time.

Carcinogens promote or facilitate a cancer to form.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) can disrupt other hormones in the body. Oestrogen mimics are a type of EDC that can interfere with the natural hormone, oestrogen, in our bodies.

Synthetic chemicals are extracted and concentrated from nature by industry or are created in a laboratory.

## Bisphenol A (BPA)

**Where:** Plastic food and drinks containers, linings of tin cans, white dental fillings, lenses,

computer and mobile phone casings, CDs and till receipts. Can leach into food products within the containers. Banned in baby bottles EU-wide as a result of our campaign.

**Why:** To harden plastics and make resins to line food and drink containers.

**What's the problem:** An endocrine disrupting chemical (EDC) linked to early puberty and breast cancer.

**Look out for:** Not required to be listed on labels.

**You can:** Avoid tinned foods. Avoid plastics marked with recycling arrows with the No.7 in them. Discard old plastic plates, beakers, cups and cutlery.

## Flame retardants

**Where:** TVs, furniture, computers, carpets and paints.

**Why:** To add fire proofing to consumer products.

**What's the problem:** An EDC linked to breast cancer. Is carcinogenic and bioaccumulative.

**Look out for:** Not required to be listed on labels. Some already banned in the EU.

**You can:** Avoid stain resistant finishes in

furniture and carpets. Choose natural materials for home furnishing.

## Parabens

**Where:** Cosmetics, some food and drinks like jams, pie fillings, beers, and pickles.

**Why:** To preserve products.

**What's the problem?** An EDC linked to breast cancer. Can be ingested and absorbed through the skin.

**Look out for:** Required to be listed on cosmetics labels only. Alkyl parahydroxy benzoates, or butyl/methyl/ethyl/propyl/isobutyl paraben.

**You can:** Choose paraben-free cosmetics.

## Pesticides

**Where:** Residues in food and field run-off into water supplies.

**Why:** Designed to kill pests.

**What's the problem:** Many are EDCs that are linked to breast cancer, are carcinogenic and toxic.

**Look out for:** Less toxic products.