



# 10 Things Parents Can Do to Protect Children from Environmental Threats

## 1. Make your lawn kid-safe

- ◆ Maintain a healthy lawn so you don't have to use insecticides and weed killers
- ◆ Use phosphorus-free organic slow release fertilizer
- ◆ Mow high and water deeply, but infrequently
- ◆ If your neighbors use weed killers, don't let kids play in the grass for a few days
- ◆ If you use a lawn care service, use one that doesn't use chemicals

## 2. Keep pesticides away from kids

- ◆ Put food and trash away in closed containers to keep pests out of your home
- ◆ Don't use pesticides if you don't have to. If you have a pest problem, look for alternatives or use low toxicity baits and traps, placed away from kids and pets
- ◆ If you need to use pesticides as a last resort, follow directions carefully. Keep pregnant women and young children out of the house until you know it's safe
- ◆ Use non-toxic head lice treatments
- ◆ Don't use insect repellents that contain DEET on young children
- ◆ Find out if your child's school or day care center uses pesticides. If they do, tell them about integrated pest management. Find information at: [www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)

## 3. Healthier cleaning and home maintenance

- ◆ If you need to paint or renovate, make sure pregnant women and young children are out of the house; increase ventilation (fan in the window); and paint in the summer when you can open the windows. Use low VOC paint
- ◆ Avoid using solvents indoors and around young children and pregnant women
- ◆ Use non-toxic cleaning products
- ◆ Air out dry cleaning before bringing into the home or ask for "wet-cleaning"

## 4. Healthy food choices

- ◆ Increase organic food in your child's diet
- ◆ Wash and/or peel non-organic produce to reduce exposure to pesticide residues
- ◆ Provide a healthy/well-balanced diet, which boosts your child's immune system and resistance
- ◆ Follow fish consumption advice and serve smaller fish, that are lower in mercury

## 5. Help children breathe easier

- ◆ Don't smoke or let others smoke in your home or car
- ◆ Check the ventilation in your home to make sure that indoor pollutants don't build up inside your home
- ◆ If you have a problem with mold or mildew, try to eliminate it.

- ◆ If you renovate, choose products (carpets, paints, wood products) which do not discharge chemicals
- ◆ If someone in your family has asthma:
- ◆ Reduce carpeted surfaces and heavy draperies
- ◆ Use allergy-resistant mattress and pillow covers
- ◆ Look for other triggers in your home like pet dander

## **6. Keep kids away from lead**

- ◆ Wipe feet or remove shoes before coming in the house
- ◆ Wash hands before meals and wash bottles, pacifiers and toys often
- ◆ If your home was built before 1978, inspect for chipping lead paint and correct problems as soon as possible
- ◆ Have children between ages 6 months to 6 years tested for lead
- ◆ Replace vinyl-miniblinds bought before 1996 with lead-free blinds sold today
- ◆ Run your water for thirty seconds, when used for drinking or cooking or get a water filter

## **7. Protect children from mercury**

- ◆ Replace mercury thermometers with non-mercury thermometers
- ◆ Be sure to dispose of mercury-containing products at your county hazardous waste site. Find mercury-free alternatives
- ◆ Follow guidelines for eating fish, especially children, pregnant women or women who intend to become pregnant. For more information go to:  
[www.healthoregon.gov/fishadv](http://www.healthoregon.gov/fishadv)

## **8. Stay away from vinyl products**

- ◆ Dispose of children's toys and vinyl products with lead and cadmium
- ◆ Replace infant vinyl chew toys made of soft plastic, with non-vinyl alternatives
- ◆ If you see "V" or "3", it's PVC, don't buy it

## **9. Protect children from too much sun**

- ◆ Have them wear hats, sunglasses and protective clothing
- ◆ Use sunscreen on kids over 6 months and keep infants out of the sun
- ◆ Keep children out of the mid-day sun – between 10 am and 4 pm

## **10. Safeguard kids from high radon levels**

- ◆ Test your home for radon with a home test kit
- ◆ Fix your home if radon level is 4 pCi/L or higher. If you need help, call the state radon office at 971-673-0496.

**For more information go to the Tiny Footprints project ([www.tinyfootprints.org](http://www.tinyfootprints.org)) of the Oregon Environmental Council ([www.oeconline.org](http://www.oeconline.org))**

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