



# Healthcare Workers

Understanding everyday toxicants and how you can minimize your exposure



## Additional Resources

Learn more about the chemicals in your everyday products and environment:

**The Environmental Working Group:** [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)

**Explore our website:** [www.seed-program.org](http://www.seed-program.org)

**Contact & Follow us:**  
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SCIENTIFIC EARLY LIFE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



**HARVARD T.H. CHAN**  
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## How can I minimize my exposure?



- Apply antibacterial and antimicrobial soaps only when medically necessary
- Replace personal care products and cleaning supplies with safer unscented products
- Use nitrile gloves without EDCs (typically listed as DEHP)
- Wash your hands after using medical equipment and electronic devices
- Limit consumption of fast or processed foods and takeout; avoid single-use plastics
- Wash produce thoroughly, filter drinking water sources, and buy organic when possible
- Look for these labels:



# EDCs

Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) interrupt normal hormonal activity by mimicking, blocking, or altering hormones and changing the way that they function in the body.

EDCs include phthalates, phenols, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other toxicants. Some EDCs are rapidly removed from the body, while others can remain in the body for a long time. Most people are exposed to multiple EDCs daily, allowing these chemicals to remain at harmful concentrations.



## These chemicals harm our health

**EDC exposure has been found to negatively impact the body. These chemicals can:**

- ✗ Impair reproductive health
- ✗ Alter metabolic function
- ✗ Increase risk of cancer development
- ✗ Reduce immune function
- ✗ Damage DNA



Healthcare workers are exposed to many hazards including EDCs. Minimizing exposure to EDCs during your reproductive years is especially important!



## EDCs are everywhere



Antibacterial or antimicrobial soaps, cleaning supplies (e.g., sprays), dust, and construction materials (e.g., plastic tubes)



Personal care products, dental products, nail polish, nail polish remover, and cosmetics



Polyvinyl chloride gloves (nitrile rubber gloves are ok)



Medical devices, medical lubricants and tubing, electronics, and some pharmaceutical capsules



Takeout containers, plastic packaging, canned foods and beverages, and plastic kitchen and storage items



Unfiltered water sources and processed drinks

