

# Protecting Reproductive Health for Males

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:**  
[SEED@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:SEED@hsph.harvard.edu)  
(Twitter and Instagram)  
[@drmesserlian](https://twitter.com/drmesserlian)



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

## How can I minimize my exposure?

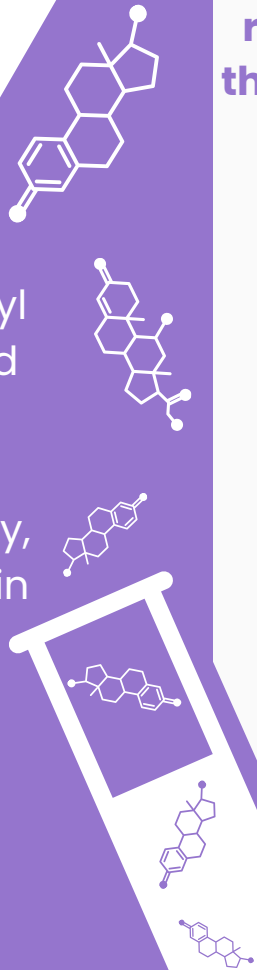


- Replace personal care products with safer alternatives that are unscented
- Avoid chemical UV filters in daily moisturizers and use mineral-based sunscreens
- Limit your use of cologne and other fragrance (e.g., candles)
- Look for 100% latex condoms and fragrance-free lubricants; use silicone sexual care items
- Do not smoke cigarettes or electronic smoking devices
- Wash your hands after handling electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops)
- Wash produce thoroughly and buy organic when possible (including organic tampons)
- Limit consumption of fast foods and takeout; avoid single-use plastics

# 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.

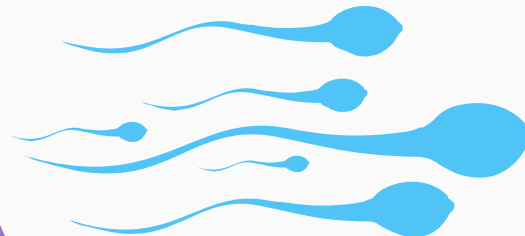
EDCs include phthalates, phenols, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and other toxicants. Some EDCs are rapidly removed from the body, while others can remain in the body for a long time. Most people are exposed to multiple EDCs daily, allowing these chemicals to remain at harmful concentrations.



## These chemicals harm your reproductive health

**Current research supports that exposure to EDCs impacts the reproductive health of men and the health of their future offspring in several ways:**

- ✗ Alters development of sperm and reproductive organs
- ✗ Impairs sperm quality and fertility
- ✗ Increases risk of adverse birth effects among female partners
- ✗ Decreases immune function and reproductive cancers
- ✗ Increases risk of obesity and metabolic disorders



While often overlooked, exposure to EDCs can lead to adverse reproductive health effects in men and their future offspring. These chemicals are everywhere, however, several companies have developed alternatives. Minimizing exposure to EDCs during your reproductive years is especially important.

### What contains EDCs?



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



Fragrance, including cologne and scented lotions



Hair gel, hairspray, hair dyes, and other hair products



Condoms, lubricants, and other sexual care products



Electronic devices and vaping mouth pieces



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