



Phthalates & Reproductive Health

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

Explore our website: www.seed-program.org

Contact & Follow us:
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 to phthalates?

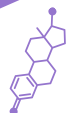


- Avoid using cosmetics and personal care products that contain phthalates
- Replace personal care and household products that have fragrance with safer products
- Limit coated-cardboard takeout containers
- Avoid foods and beverages stored in plastic or canned containers
- Wash produce thoroughly and buy organic when possible
- Check materials prior to purchasing household furnishings
- Review product labels and look for phthalate-free items (without DBP, DEHP, DINP, DEP, DMP, BBP, DNOP, and DIDP).

Phthalates

Phthalates are endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) that are rapidly removed from the body. Still, these chemicals are found in many everyday products, leading to chronic and harmful exposure.

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

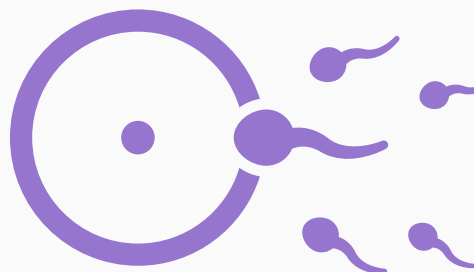


These chemicals are everywhere

Phthalates are found in several everyday items. Current research warns that exposure to these chemicals can harm human health.

Phthalates lead to a variety of adverse reproductive health effects. These chemicals can:

- ✗ Decrease fertility and fecundity
- ✗ Change reproductive hormones
- ✗ Alter sperm and egg growth
- ✗ Damage the lungs, kidneys and liver



Phthalates are commonly added to increase flexibility and durability of materials such as plastic grocery bags. We are exposed to these chemicals through our diet, skin (absorption), and even the air we breathe.

Where are phthalates found?



Personal care products, nail polish, and cosmetics



Takeout containers, plastic packaging and bottles, and plastic storage containers



Pharmaceuticals and medical devices



Cleaning supplies, candles, air fresheners, and household dust



Furniture, carpets, and construction materials



Cigarette smoke, vaping mouth pieces, and electronics