Suffolk County Cancer Awareness
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Smart Tip - Household Products

Tip: **Did you know that many of the products we bring into our homes may contain ingredients that are linked to cancer? Careful choices about products we use for cleaning, crafts and hobbies, maintenance, pest control and personal care can reduce your family's exposure and risk.**

Evidence:

Consider how much time you and your children spend in your home. Some of the common products that we use in our homes contain ingredients that have been linked to cancer, such as petroleum ingredients or formaldehyde[1]. Use of these products can lead to indoor air contamination, and unnecessary exposure to you and your family. Many of these common ingredients have been detected in the indoor air samples collected from homes[2]. In addition, many have been detected in blood and urine samples collected from the US population[3].

Here are just some examples of potentially harmful ingredients that can be found in products used around the homes.[1,4,5]

- Plastics: bisphenol A, phthalates, polystyrene
- Detergents: nonyl phenol
- Art supplies: heavy metals, glues, photo-developing chemicals
- Cosmetics: parabens, phthalates
- Paints and Stains: petroleum solvents and volatile organic chemicals
- Pesticides: indoor and outdoor treatments. Examples of pesticides that have shown evidence of causing cancer or endocrine disruption are; chlordane, DDT, 2, 4 D, simazine.

Recommendations:

- ✓ Take the attached Home Survey to see where you can reduce exposure to household chemicals and reduce your risk.
- ✓ Read the label: Always read the label and find out the ingredients in the products you use.[6]
- ✓ Never mix household products unless the label directs you to do so or you may produce harmful gases.
- ✓ Select the least toxic product for the task.

- ✓ Purchase only the amount you need because containers may get damaged and leak during storage.
- ✓ Always follow the directions on the label for proper use of the product.
- ✓ Be sure to use volatile materials in a well ventilated area.
- ✓ Check the US Department of Health and Human Services website of Household Products to see what might be in your products (**http://hpd.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm**).

Resources:

For more information you may want to check out these websites:

- To search for information on household ingredients: http://hpd.nlm.nih.gov/index.htm
- For general information about risk factors for breast cancer: http://envirocancer.cornell.edu
- For information on the safe use of household products: http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/factsheet/General/fs22.safeUse.pdf :
- For information about pesticide use around the home: http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/factsheet/Pesticide/fs31.ipm.pdf
- For information about environmental risks and breast cancer: http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/factsheet/general/fs45.chemical.pdf
- To find out what might be in your products: www.msds.com
- An interactive website which presents information on keeping your home healthy: http://www.uwex.edu/healthyhome/tool/
- For information from the US Environmental Protection Agency on sources of indoor air pollution: http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html

References:

1. World Health Organization, 2009. Agents Reviewed by the IARC Monographs, Volumes 1-100A (by CAS Numbers). International Agency for Research on Cancer, updated April 2, 2009.

2. United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2009. *An Introduction to Indoor Air Quality*. *1/26/09* *http://www.epa.gov/iaq/ia-intro.html*.

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. *National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals (Third Report)*. United States Department of Health and Human Services. NCEH Pub#:05-0725.

4. Brody, Julia Green, and Ruthann A. Rudel, 2003. *Environmental Pollutants and Breast Cancer*. Environmental Health Perspectives Volume 111 No. 8 June 2003. pp 1007-1019.

5. Cornell University Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors (BCERF), 2009. *Breast Cancer: The Estrogen Connection*. http://envirocancer.cornell.edu/research/endocrine/videos/

6. Cornell Cooperative Extension, 1992. Household Cleaning Products-What About *Substitutes?*