

### **Common Chemicals and their Impact on Heart Health**

When we think about heart health, we often focus on diet, exercise, and stress. But did you know that everyday chemicals found in our homes and environments can also impact our hearts? Many common products contain chemicals that can be harmful to our cardiovascular system. Let's explore some of these chemicals, where they're commonly found, and simple ways to reduce your exposure.

#### **Pesticides**

Pesticides are chemicals used to kill pests, but they can have harmful effects on people, too. Studies have shown that long-term exposure to pesticides can increase the risk of heart disease by damaging blood vessels and increasing inflammation. Commonly found in lawn treatments, bug sprays, and even some foods, pesticides can build up in our bodies over time.

**How to Reduce Exposure:** Opt for organic foods when possible, especially for produce that typically has high pesticide residues, like apples and strawberries. Opt for ecological solutions and use only non- to least-toxic pest control. .

#### **Phthalates**

Phthalates are chemicals often used to make plastics flexible and durable. They're found in many household products, from plastic containers to vinyl flooring, and even in personal care items like lotions and shampoos. Research suggests that phthalates may interfere with hormones that regulate blood pressure, which can increase the risk of hypertension and heart disease.



**How to Reduce Exposure:** Avoid plastic containers labeled with recycling codes 3 or 7, which often contain phthalates. Look for phthalate-free personal care products and avoid air fresheners, which commonly contain these chemicals.

### **Bisphenol A (BPA)**

BPA is a chemical used in making certain plastics and resins. You'll often find it in food and drink packaging, especially canned foods and plastic containers. BPA can disrupt hormone levels and increase blood pressure, both of which are linked to heart disease risk.

**How to Reduce Exposure:** Choose BPA-free products, and use glass or stainless steel containers for food storage. When buying canned foods, look for brands that use BPA-free linings.

### **Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**

VOCs are gasses released from many household items, including paints, furniture, cleaning products, and air fresheners. Breathing in high levels of VOCs can cause respiratory issues, but long-term exposure has also been linked to an increased risk of heart problems. VOCs can contribute to inflammation and may even affect heart rhythm.

**How to Reduce Exposure:** Choose low-VOC or VOC-free paints and cleaning products. Ventilate your home regularly by opening windows, and avoid using air fresheners or heavily scented candles.

### **Common Chemicals can Disrupt the Heart's Rhythm**

New research highlights that some chemicals commonly found in shampoos, personal care products, and plastics may interfere with heart rhythm regulation. These substances, such as certain phthalates and parabens, can influence the way the heart responds to electrical signals. The disruption to these signals can potentially lead to



arrhythmias, or irregular heartbeats, which may increase the risk of more serious cardiovascular conditions over time. Such findings suggest that repeated exposure to these chemicals, even at low levels, could have a subtle but significant effect on heart health.

**How to Reduce Exposure:** Choose personal care products that are fragrance-free and least toxic, always read labels and avoid parabens, phthalates, and other chemical additives that can interfere with heart health, rhythm, and overall well-being.

### **Keeping Your Heart Safe from Chemicals**

Reducing chemical exposure may seem overwhelming, but simple changes can make a big difference. Here are some quick tips to protect your heart from harmful chemicals:

- Eat organic fresh, whole foods to avoid chemical-laden packaging and pesticides.
- Use natural or non-toxic cleaning products and personal care items.
- Find ecological solutions to harsh chemicals.
- Ventilate your home daily to improve ventilation.
- Invest in quality air and water filters and check humidity levels to avoid mould issues in your home.

### **Conclusion**

Our hearts are at the centre of our health, and taking steps to eliminate and reduce exposure to these common chemicals can help protect them. By being mindful of what's in our homes and the products we use, we can make a positive impact on our heart health and overall well-being. Small changes can go a long way toward creating a healthier, safer environment for you and your loved ones - and a more friendly planet for all !