



Heal Your Home: The Case for Precaution

Creating a Healthy Home:

Think you can't get by without conventional cleaners? We'll show you how to do that and more — in any room

The Green Life is the Good Life:

Author Annie B. Bond on the joys of nontoxic living

Protective Action to Prevent Harm:

How the Precautionary Principle is revolutionizing business and politics.

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Co-op America's programs are designed to: 1) Educate people about how to use their spending and investing power to bring the values of social justice and environmental sustainability into the economy, 2) Help socially and environmentally responsible businesses emerge and thrive, and 3) Pressure irresponsible companies to adopt socially and environmentally responsible practices.

Here's what you can do: Reduce, reuse, recycle, and repair to conserve and protect the Earth's resources. Read *Co-op America Quarterly* and *Real Money* for sustainable living tips for you, your workplace, and your community.

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As a national nonprofit 501(c)(3) membership organization, all contributions to Co-op America are tax-deductible. We welcome your membership and contributions.

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Co-op America's Online Heal Your Home Center:

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Healthy Homes, Healthy Economy, Healthy Planet

It has hit my family—I hope yours has been spared.

But the grim reality is that too many families like yours and mine are facing a serious illness that may have been caused or triggered by toxins in our environment—asthma, autism, autoimmune disorders, cancer, diabetes, debilitating fatigue, and fertility problems, to name a few. Some researchers believe that the obesity epidemic sweeping our country may have roots in toxins that are in our food, water, and air.

As a society, we're conducting massive experiments on people's health. Here in the US, about 80,000 industrial chemicals are registered for use in all the products we eat, touch, put on, and sleep in every day—food, toys, household cleaners, body care products, furniture. Fewer than 20 percent of these have been tested for their impact on human health or the environment.

Wouldn't it make more sense to prove that something is safe before exposing anyone to it? Before running the risk of harming people who use the product, workers who make it, and the communities where the manufacturing facilities are located?

That's the idea behind the Precautionary Principle. It turns right-side-up the upside-down way society now makes decisions about risk.

The Precautionary Principle requires proof that something is safe before it is introduced in products or practices. It counsels to err on the side of caution in the face of uncertainty, especially when the potential impacts are irreversible. If a chemical could cause cancer, climate change, species extinction, don't use it; find another way. And put the burden and cost of proof on the company making the product. Do not, as is the current practice, put the burden and cost on families, workers, or communities to prove they've been harmed.

What's exciting is that more companies, cities, and countries, including those in the European Union, are starting to use this commonsense approach—eloquently advanced by the 1998 Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary

Principle—for making their corporate and regulatory decisions.

Here at Co-op America, we use the Precautionary Principle when we make recommendations to you about healthy product choices. If, for example, research suggests that the ingredients in popular conventional cleaning products could cause cancer or immune system disorders, we advise you to turn to green cleaners or to make your own. Early evidence is enough for our recommendations—we don't wait for the "body count" to accumulate.

“Wouldn't it make more sense to prove that something is safe before exposing anyone to it?”

That's why we've put this issue of the *Quarterly* together for you. We want you to have, in one place, our best recommendations for avoiding the increasing number of toxic chemicals in the products we all use in our homes. Check out our “Creating a Healthy Home” feature (p. 10) and our new online Heal Your Home Center (www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome), where you'll find many of our articles on green, nontoxic living from the past several years. Turn to our “Answers from the Experts” (p. 22), where leading physicians and toxicologists share their research and ideas on why and how to avoid toxins.

We also want you to have the Precautionary Principle framework for how society can change its decision-making to produce better health for families, workers, communities, and the environment. This framework can help all of us better advocate for the changes we want corporations and governments to make in their practices and policies. Check out our editor, Tracy Fernandez Rysavy's introduction on “The Case for Precaution” (p. 6) and her interview with Carolyn Raffensperger (p. 32), the convener of the Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle.

Tracy is passionate about protecting the health and safety of families—and you can see this in what she writes about the Precautionary Principle and in our editorial team's well-researched advice in all of our publications.

As you turn the pages, you won't be surprised to see another theme emerging—that making healthy choices for your home, purchasing products from green companies and demanding that corporations clean up their acts are powerful strategies for keeping your family healthy *and* for accelerating the shift to a green economy.

You also won't be surprised to see that these issues link directly to all of the green economy issues we work on together here at Co-op America. For example, when it comes to worker health and safety, the same chemicals that can harm us at home are dangerous at work. It's bad enough to be in workplaces that use commercial-strength cleaners—it's even worse if you are part of the cleaning crews or work in the companies manufacturing these chemicals. Turn to p. 25 to learn how standing for green working conditions is part of the push for social and economic justice.

You'll also see the links when it comes to the climate crisis (p. 27). The emissions from cars and coal-fired plants exacerbate the health effects from toxins in the products in our homes. In turn, the manufacture of these products accelerates the climate crisis, and as the temperature heats up, the health effects from these toxins will worsen. Switching to green energy will help everyone breathe easier—and cool our planet.

We invite you to dive into this issue, find more ways to protect your family, and know that each time you make healthier, greener choices, you are helping green the economy.

Here's to healthy homes, a healthy economy and a healthy planet for all,

Alisa Gravitz
Executive Director

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Co-op America members Lisa Franseen (pictured above) and Tom Karas share their magazines and other green literature with their neighbors via their "Eco-Depot" box.

A Zero-Waste Way to Spread the Green Word

After reading your *Getting to Zero Waste* issue (Fall 2007), we thought we'd send pictures of the way we get extra mileage out of the *Quarterly*. Our "Eco-Depot" sits at the end of our long driveway, where it gets a lot of attention from walkers and neighbors. Tons of green living info have been distributed to our neighbors this way (okay, maybe not tons, but a lot).

Thanks for your good work. We are all in this together.

Tom Karas & Lisa Franseen
 Traverse City, MI

Editor's Note: See, this is why we love our members so much. We're glad you're finding a way to extend the life of our materials, and we're always happy when people share them to spread the word about Co-op America and the joys of going green.

Another Thing You Can Recycle

I suggest adding wine corks to your "21 Things You Didn't Know You Could Recycle" list (*Getting to Zero Waste*, Fall 2007). Yemm & Hart collects them with the goal of recycling them into wine cork flooring tiles. Here's a link to the company: www.yemmhart.com/news+/winecorkrecycling.htm.

Jay Morrow
 E-mail

Let us know what you think!

We really love to hear from you. Call the editors at 202/872-5327, fax 202/331-8166, write Co-op America Quarterly, 1612 K St. NW, #600, Washington, DC 20006, or e-mail: editors@coopamerica.org.

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Mercury in CFLs?

We appreciate your Fall 2007 *Getting to Zero Waste* issue. We did not realize that compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contained small amounts of mercury! Is there a less cumbersome way to dispose of them than to take them to an IKEA store or to mail them to Sylvania, as suggested in the magazine? Is it possible that local recycling centers will begin to collect CFLs?

Sharon & Peter Moller
 Leadville, CO

Editor's Note: CFLs do indeed contain trace amounts of mercury, but they still come out ahead of incandescents. Each CFL contains five milligrams (mg) of mercury—about as much as the ball point of a ballpoint pen. The average coal-fired power plant—the largest sources of mercury emission in the US—spews about 13.6 mg of mercury to power an incandescent bulb, but it only emits 3.3 mg to power an energy-saving CFL, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists. Add that to the five mg in the bulb, and you're still responsible for less mercury if you switch to CFLs. Plus you enjoy all the energy-saving and greenhouse-gas-reducing benefits, too. If everyone in the US made the switch, we could shut down 80 coal-fired plants, says a new report by the Earth Policy Institute.

The most convenient way to dispose of your CFLs (which can last up to 13 times longer than incandescents) is to call your local solid waste authority and ask about your options. Some areas may have local CFL recycling, but some will dispose of the bulbs as hazardous waste. That's why we gave you the IKEA and Sylvania RecyclePak options (see www.coopamerica.org/pubs/caq/articles/21Things.cfm).

We called the High Country Conservation Center in Frisco, CO, which answers recycling questions for residents in your area. They accept CFLs locally for recycling: 970/668-5703, www.highcountryconservation.org.

Now that CFLs are going to be mandatory in the US, thanks to the passage of the new energy bill, recycling efforts are likely to pick up. Be sure to let manufacturers, stores, and your solid waste authority know you want to see CFL recycling. And General Electric announced in October that it is working on a CFL that contains one mg of mercury. Someday, there may be no mercury in CFLs at all.



A special update about one of Co-op America's Climate Action campaigns.

Stop the Insanity of Mountaintop Removal

Coal mining has always been hard, dangerous work in the Appalachian mountains. Just ask Lorelei Scarbro, who is the daughter, sister, and widow of West Virginia coal miners. Her husband mined for 35 years and died of black lung eight years ago.

These days, coal mining is still taking a toll on the health of mining families, and through mountaintop removal mining, coal companies are also literally leveling the mountains themselves, which have formed the landscapes of Appalachian communities for centuries.

Co-op America has taken a stand against coal-fired power because it is the largest source of global warming emissions in the US and because it sends harmful pollutants like mercury and acid rain into our air, water, and soil. As part of our Climate Action campaign, we're also demanding that Big Coal stop this destructive mining practice—it's one more way for us to show why coal can't compete with clean, green, safe, renewable energy.

Moving Mountains for Coal

Mountaintop removal mining (MTR) does exactly what the name implies—first, mining companies clear-cut forest, exposing the tops of mountains. Then, they use explosives to blow off layers of rock, and from there they start mining for coal. It's not a rare practice—mining companies use five million pounds of explosives a day in the Appalachian mountains, according to The Southern Energy Conservation Initiative. An online "mountain memorial" at www.ilovemountains.org/ memorial documents the destruction of 470 mountains in the region.

Once the mountaintops are blown off, enormous machinery dumps waste rock into adjacent valleys, threatening communities by polluting air and water and causing property damage. Because MTR deforests and flattens terrain, communities are also at greater risk from flooding.

Communities at Risk

Many West Virginians, like Scarbro, have already watched the skyline of their childhoods disappear. But MTR could be robbing the children who live in adjacent communities of not just a

pretty view, but a healthy life. Scarbro's children attended Marsh Fork Elementary School in the shadow of a coal silo owned by Massey, one of the largest US coal mining companies, which is pursuing MTR on a large scale. Coal dust blows into the school air ducts and settles on playground equipment.

Mountain Justice Summer reports a cluster of cancer cases among the school's staff and graduates. Paper bags cover the water fountains because the water isn't safe for consumption.

"The [area's] water is definitely a different color," says Scarbro. "It has a film on it, and murky stuff on the edges ... not something that any of us should drink."

But Scarbro's greatest worry is the waste pond uphill from the school: 2.8 billion gallons of slurry is dammed off about 400 yards away. Any coal mining creates "slurry," but MTR mining increases the danger posed by this toxic liquid waste, which contains mercury, chromium, arsenic, and lead. Though dams contain the slurry, repeated MTR explosions nearby can cause structural damage to the dams, leading to leaks. Almost one third of the sludge dams built in West Virginia over the last four decades have failed, and Massey is responsible for over half of West Virginia's spills.

Even before MTR was common, a 1972 flood in Logan County, WV, unleashed 132 million gallons of coal sludge on Buffalo Creek Hollow, killing 125 people and leaving thousands homeless. In the fall of 2000, 300 million gallons of slurry from Massey mines spilled into the headwaters of two Kentucky creeks—the largest environmental disaster east of the Mississippi.

"I remember Buffalo Creek," says Scarbro. "It terrifies me to think that the same thing could happen here. There are over 200 children in that school. If that [dam] breaks, those kids won't make it out of there alive."



A mountaintop removal mine encroaches on a small community in Appalachia.

Victor Stockton/Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Join Co-op America's MTR Campaign: Stop Fossil Fools

Last fall, the Department of the Interior proposed weakening regulations for mining companies, raising the spectre of more MTR mining across Appalachia. Scarbro organized her neighbors to speak at a hearing on the proposal in Charleston, WV, where she says she was intimidated by coal company representatives. And thousands of Co-op America members submitted comments objecting to the proposal. The Office of Surface Mining has not yet weighed in on the fate of the proposed rule change.

On April 1st, we'll ask banks to stop being "Fossil Fools" that subsidize dirty energy and MTR mining. Join us: Find an action near you or plan your own at www.climateaction.org.

Even as Scarbro fights on, Massey is closing in; the company recently filed a permit to build a large MTR mine next to her home, a house her husband built himself, on land where his family has lived for a century.

MTR devastates communities and damages ecosystems—and it isn't necessary. We don't need more MTR coal, which supplies less than five percent of current energy needs. Conservation measures alone could save 20 percent of US energy use, and wind and solar could generate clean energy for all. Green energy can also provide healthy, good paying jobs to replace dangerous mining jobs. Our work together to shift to green energy helps hasten the day when coal power won't feed demand for the coal beneath Appalachian mountains. **CAQ**

—Yochanan Zakai & Joelle Novey

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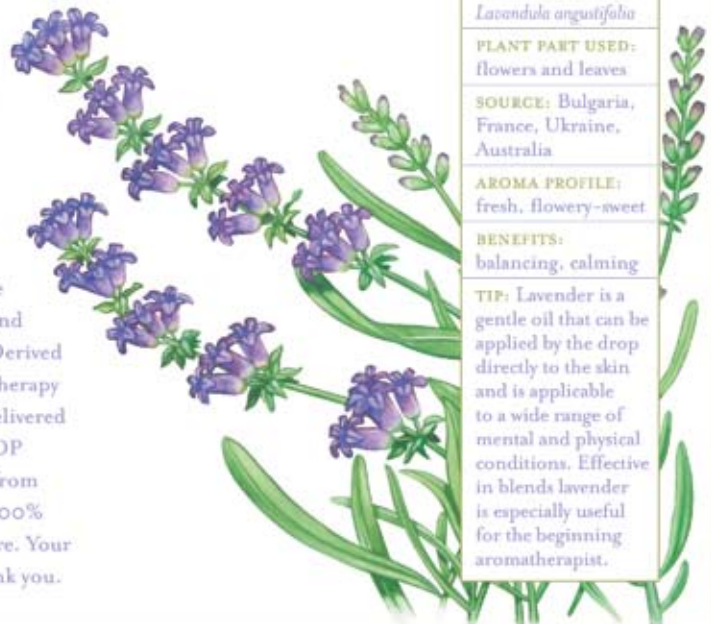
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AROMA PROFILE: fresh, flowery-sweet
BENEFITS: balancing, calming
TIP: Lavender is a gentle oil that can be applied by the drop directly to the skin and is applicable to a wide range of mental and physical conditions. Effective in blends lavender is especially useful for the beginning aromatherapist.



There are now over 80,000 chemicals used in consumer products and manufacturing in the US—and very few have been tested for safety. It's time to take a stand so we can truly protect human health and the environment.

Childhood asthma rates have more than doubled since 1980, an unprecedented rise that many physicians attribute, in part, to increased air pollution and use of toxic cleaning products.

Heal Your Home: The Case for Precaution

Some time ago, Co-op America published an article called “The Ugly Side of Cosmetics,” in which we detailed why many experts are concerned about the vast number of potential toxins in body care products.

That article, printed in our *Real Money* newsletter, cited studies showing that many of the body care products we use on a daily basis—from make-up and hair care products to soaps and baby wipes—contain known or probable carcinogens, hormone disrupters, and other potentially harmful substances. We recommended consumers exercise extra caution and purchase their body care items from companies that pledged to phase out the most harmful chemicals and use organic and truly natural ingredients (see p. 14).

Not too long after we printed that piece, a group of individuals started discussing the article on an Internet message board. At first, they were concerned—until a young woman popped in and reassured everyone that “I’m a chemistry major, and all of these products are safe. The government wouldn’t let them be on store shelves if they weren’t.”

Like that student, many people have considerable faith in the government to protect them, assuming that if a product of any type is sold in the US, it must be safe for human health and the environment.

That faith is misplaced. As evidenced by the recent news reports about lead in children’s toys made in China, toxic products can and do make it onto US store shelves. For

example, mainstream newspapers backed up our cosmetics story this year, when in October 2007, the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics discovered lead in several trusted brands of lipsticks still sold today in US stores, from drugstore stalwart L’Oreal to the more exclusive Dior brand.

“How is lead getting into children’s toys and my make-up?” asks a shocked Suzanne Anich, mother to an 18-month-old daughter in Eagan, MN. “I thought lead was completely banned from use in the US.”

So did a lot of people. But lead—a potent, known neurotoxicant—is only banned in paint at levels over 600 parts per million, and it can *legally* be mixed into other products, like the vinyl shower curtain in Anich’s bathroom, the vinyl bib her toddler sometimes uses, the computer in her home office, the cell phone in her purse, and the mainstream-brand makeup she used to use before discovering green products. And yes, even in her daughter’s toys.

“Some of the toxic toys we’re hearing about now did have illegal lead levels, but some of them were probably perfectly legal, especially the children’s jewelry, where the lead can be mixed into the product,” notes Dr. Steven Gilbert, a toxicologist with the University of Washington and author of *A Small Dose of Toxicology* (Informa Press, 2004).

And we have more than just lead to worry about. There are now some 80,000 chemicals registered for use in the US, and more than 2,000 new chemicals are introduced

each year, according to the Commonweal Biomonitoring Resource Center and the Body Burden Work Group.

“While the government does require health studies and pre-market testing on prescription drugs, it does not do so for most other chemicals,” says Gilbert.

In other words, when you take a close look at the cleaners we use in our homes; the pesticides that we spray on our food; the hormones ingested by our meat or dairy animals; the paints and stains and finishes we use on our cars, furniture, mattresses, or walls; the body and hair care products we use on ourselves, you’ll find that very few of them are independently tested to ensure they won’t harm human health or the environment before they hit store shelves. (For an in-depth look at what US federal regulations do and don’t do when it comes to chemicals, see the box below.)

And while corporations may save money by not conducting health and safety tests on the ingredients they use, it’s consumers who pay the price. Time and again, it falls to consumers, university scientists, or nonprofit watchdog groups to prove that a given chemical or product is unsafe—which generally happens only after several people have been harmed or killed, after our air and water and soil becomes poisoned, after entire populations are burdened with more than their share of birth defects, systemic illnesses, cancer.

“So much of public health and environmental policy relies on what I call the ‘dead body’ principle,” says Carolyn Raffensperger, executive director of the Science and Health Environmental Network (SEHN). “When you wait for proof before you take action, the proof is usually in the dead bodies and the sick bodies. When you let the chemical out and haven’t tested it, you’re using our bodies as lab rats.”

But we don’t have to rely on the dead body principle, say Raffensperger and others, who are calling for a better way to protect ourselves and future generations. It’s called the Precautionary Principle, and it’s something we embrace here at Co-op America, whenever we recommend a green product or service over a conventional one or screen a company for membership in our Green Business Network™. It’s why when industry assures us that something is “safe,” we don’t take that for granted. It’s why we champion the cleanest, greenest way of doing business over business as usual.

THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

When Carolyn Raffensperger was a young girl, her father, a pediatric surgeon, came home from work and made an announcement that would reverberate throughout her life.

“He said he believed the birth defects and childhood tumors that he was a world expert on were caused by pollution,” says Raffensperger. “And when he told me he couldn’t do anything about it because he couldn’t prove it, I was stunned. He was seeing suffering in babies, and they hadn’t done anything to deserve it. Why, I wondered, did he need proof before he could take action?”

It was a question that ultimately led her to SEHN, where she and her colleagues worked to determine how the world could go beyond what’s called “risk assessment.” The way we currently calculate the risk of a chemical is to determine the level at which lab animals get sick from it. Then, we plug it into a formula that basically says, “If we use this much less than what makes animals sick, we should be okay.”

But sometimes, Raffensperger knew, even those low doses of a chemical could cause harm, alone or in

Is Our Government Protecting Us?

Chemicals used in manufacturing—including those in the products we buy, like toys, furniture, and cleaners—are regulated under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA). This law gave the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the right to track the nearly 80,000 industrial chemicals used in the US. But many say it’s too weak to truly keep us safe.

TSCA technically requires that new chemicals be subject to toxicity reviews before coming to market, but in practice, the government has done little to prevent dangerous chemicals from being used. Since 1976, the EPA has only required the testing of 200 chemicals, and has banned a scant five from use. Under TSCA, companies must disclose the ingredients of their products to the EPA, but they don’t have to submit toxicity data for any new chemicals they want to use, as pointed out in a 2005 Government Accountability Office report.

More disturbingly, about 80 percent of the chemicals that fall under the TSCA have not been tested at all. Instead, some 62,000 were “grandfathered” in when TSCA was signed into law in 1976 and were simply presumed safe.

Labeling laws don’t require companies to provide complete lists of ingredients to anyone but the EPA, so other organizations aren’t able to review them for safety. Products only need to carry warning labels if a chemical ingredient has been proven to pose unreasonable risk to health. And before the EPA can require companies to test chemicals for safety, the agency must prove

that the chemical poses “unreasonable risks” to human health.

“The EPA, through TSCA, seldom requires industry to produce data,” says Dr. Steven Gilbert, a toxicologist with the University of Washington and author of *A Small Dose of Toxicology*. “With about 3,000 chemicals produced at over 1 million pounds each year going into our environment, it’s a huge issue that our government doesn’t take a more precautionary approach.”

With all its flaws, TSCA doesn’t even apply to cosmetics—a broad category of products including make-up, lotion, shampoo, deodorant, and other personal care products—which fall under the regulation of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The FDA does not review or approve cosmetics, or their ingredients, before they are sold to the public. It merely urges companies to conduct voluntary safety tests. And so, according to the nonprofit Environmental Working Group (EWG), 89 percent of ingredients used in cosmetics have not been assessed for safety by the FDA or the industry.

The bottom line is that both the FDA or the EPA could do much better. “TSCA has only managed to eliminate five toxic chemicals of the nearly 80,000 in commerce,” says Kathy Curtis, policy director of Clean New York. “None have been eliminated in over 17 years, despite mounting evidence of their harm to humans and the environment, and increasing availability of safer alternatives.” —Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist

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combination with other substances in the environment. So she and her colleagues wondered how they could get governments around the world to take action to protect human health and the Earth before having definitive proof.

The answer came in 1998, when a graduate student named Joel Tickner wrote and asked her to participate in his dissertation work on an idea he called the Precautionary Principle.

“I knew this was an answer to the question we’d been asking. Within minutes of seeing the student’s request, I decided to convene the Wingspread Conference,” she says.

And so, ten years ago, Raffensperger, Tickner, and a group of scientists, philosophers, lawyers, and activists gathered at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, WI, to take a stand against the harm we are doing to ourselves, the environment, and future generations. The group reached an historic consensus that “corporations, government entities, organizations, communities, scientists and other individuals must adopt a precautionary approach to all human endeavors.”

The group released the Wingspread Statement elaborating on their consensus, which defines the heart of the Precautionary Principle as follows: *When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof.*

“Risk assessment embodies the idea that we can measure and manage or control risk and harm—and we can decide that some risk is acceptable,” says Raffensperger. “The Precautionary Principle is a very different idea that says that as an ethical matter, we are going to prevent all the harm we can.”

To illustrate how things would change if we adopted the Precautionary Principle as the backbone of US chemical policy, Raffensperger cites the example of mercury used as a preservative in vaccines. “Risk assessment science says it doesn’t look like mercury in vaccines causes damage, but there’s still a raging debate going on about whether it causes autism in children. And whether it does or not, mercury just isn’t good for children. We don’t have to wait for definitive proof that we’re harming kids before we take action, especially if we have alternatives. The Precautionary Principle says that if you’ve got safer alternatives, why not use them?”

A DECADE OF HOPE

As we celebrate ten years of the Precautionary Principle, it’s important to also celebrate the considerable impact it’s had. While there hasn’t yet been much in the way of federal action in the US, some states and several countries are moving toward a more precautionary approach:

- The state of California recently banned phthalates, plastic softeners linked to endocrine disruption, in cosmetics and in toys. Last December, Minnesota banned toxic mercury in cosmetics sold in the state. In Washington state, some communities have decided that hospitals and schools must be cleaned with non-chemical-based products. And in Massachusetts, proposed legislation would require using only nontoxic cleaners in day cares, schools, and other public buildings.

- The European Union (EU) recently passed the groundbreaking Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals law, or REACH. Under REACH, more than 60,000 chemicals will have to be registered with the EU and, for the first time, evaluated for toxicity to human health and the environment. Substances of high concern will be removed from the market unless the manufacturers can prove their

Two young girls protest the use of PBDEs as flame retardants in furniture, electronics, and mattresses. These persistent, bioaccumulative chemicals are linked to memory, behavior, and learning impairment in lab animals.

The Washington Toxics Coalition/www.watoxics.org



safety. (See p. 29 for more on REACH and its potential impact here in the US.)

- Businesses like green household products company Seventh Generation[™] and organic body care company Aubrey Organics[™] are going the extra mile to protect human health and the environment, workers and communities. They’re using the safest ingredients they can find, and they’re fully disclosing those ingredients on product labels or Web sites, even though they’re not legally obligated to do so. And consumers are taking a stand by purchasing these cleaner, greener products.

“The Precautionary Principle says that if you’ve got safer alternatives, why not use them?”


“The green marketplace is booming in every sector—from nontoxic body care to organic food to green cleaners,” says Denise Hamler, director of Co-op America’s Green Business Network[™]. “People are letting manufacturers know that they don’t want hidden toxins in their products.”

- These green businesses and consumers are influencing mainstream industry, as well-known brands launch green product lines to keep up with consumer demand. Target has pledged to phase out PVC (vinyl) products, which contain phthalates. In cooperation with none other than the Sierra Club, Clorox is introducing “Green Works,” a line of less-toxic household cleaners. Home Depot is now selling several brands of environmentally friendly home improvement products, flagging them in stores with an “Eco-Options” sign.

Then there are the efforts of people like Co-op America members, who are working to keep toxins out of their homes, workplaces, and communities. Use our “Creating a Healthy Home” section (pp. 10-20) to take the most important steps to clear the air in your household. And check out our “Answers from the Experts” section (pp. 22-32) for expert advice on making green living joyful at home while we push the marketplace and our politicians for reform.

We are creating change when it comes to toxic chemical products and processes, and we can keep creating change together, until no one has to worry about being exposed to something that will make them or their children sick.

“Do we want to leave a toxic legacy? Or do we want to leave the blessings of a healthy world?” asks Raffensperger.

We can do either one. 

—Tracy Fernandez Rysavy

Creating a Healthy Home

The start of a new year is, for many of us, a time for new beginnings in our personal lives. People resolve to lose weight, exercise more, simplify their lives, buy less, spend more time with loved ones, do good in the world. 2008 is also the perfect time for all of us to take stock of our homes as well. We can resolve to get rid of as many toxins as possible, while bringing in healthy meals, water, and household and personal care products. The results go beyond cleaner food and indoor air—if every home in the US followed our tips below, we'd create a watershed of support for hundreds of clean, green, less-toxic products, sending a clear message to companies that they either need to go green or close shop.

The Top 4 Steps to a Healthy Home



1

GET RID OF CONVENTIONAL CLEANERS

THE PROBLEM: Many household cleaners contain **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)*** such as **formaldehyde**, harsh acids, and **hormone disruptors**. (See p. 20 for a glossary of all boldface terms.)

May be linked to: cancer, endocrine disruption, eye, throat, and lung irritation.

THE SOLUTION: Use nontoxic, biodegradable cleaners free of synthetic fragrances. Or save money and go easy on the Earth by making your own.


NATIONAL GREEN PAGES™ CATEGORY:** “Cleaning Products.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER** (online at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome): “Ten Steps to Clean Green.”



Co-op America's Online “Heal Your Home Center”:

Our “Heal Your Home Center” on our Web site is a one-stop shop for the articles we've written on nontoxic living over the past few years, from finding least-toxic paints and stains to making your own green cleaners to detoxing your entire bedroom.

Look for this icon  next to the titles of articles you'll find in the center.

Visit www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome today!

2

USE CARE WITH PAINTS/ STAINS

THE PROBLEM: Conventional paints contain three chemicals worth worrying about: **VOCs**, fungicides, and biocides. Some paints have toxic pigments, too. VOCs are the primary solvent in oil-based paint and a component in water-based paint. Biocides and fungicides are chemicals designed to extend paint's shelf life and prevent mildew once applied. Problematic ingredients can include **mercury, arsenic disulfide, phenol, and formaldehyde.**

Paint containing **lead** levels over 660 parts per million is no longer legal in the US, but many homes painted up to the 1970s still have lead paint.

May be linked to: reproductive toxicity, neurotoxicity (lead paint), developmental damage.

THE SOLUTION: Use super-low or zero-VOC paints and stains. Look also for "biocide-free" paints with natural pigments. If your home was built before 1970, test your home and your children's blood lead levels. Paint over lead-based paint to minimize dust and chipping.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: "Paints."


 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** "Nontoxic Paints and Stains."

3

LOOK FOR SUSTAINABLE FURNITURE

THE PROBLEM: Some wood furniture can release **VOCs** from adhesives and finishes. Urea **formaldehyde** is used in particle-board furniture. Most upholstered furniture is treated with flame-retardant **polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs).**

May be linked to: cancer, endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity, respiratory irritation.

THE SOLUTION: Seal exposed edges of particle board and pressed wood with a zero-VOC sealant (like AFM Safecoat's  Safe Seal sealant—www.afmsafecoat.com).

Consider buying all-natural furniture, made from solid wood or natural, organic ingredients like organic cotton or hemp. Look for furniture made without toxic flame retardants.

ECO-BONUS: Wood furniture certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) supports sustainable forestry practices, preserving old-growth forests throughout the world.


NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: "Furniture."

4

FIND THE RIGHT FLOORING

THE PROBLEM: Wall-to-wall carpets are notorious for harboring allergens and trapping toxins like pesticides that get tracked in from outside. Most synthetic carpets and their adhesives also emit **VOCs**. Carpeting may be treated with **benzyl benzoate** or other chemicals for mothproofing or to repel moisture.

May be linked to: cancer, endocrine disruption, neurotoxicity, respiratory irritation.

THE SOLUTION: Don't put down new wall-to-wall carpeting, and consider removing any current carpet, especially if any family members have breathing problems. You can apply AFM's  nontoxic Carpet Seal (www.afmsafecoat.com) to lock in off-gassing toxins from newer carpets. Use a HEPA vacuum weekly to remove allergens.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: "Flooring" and "Carpets/Rugs"

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** "Eco-Flooring Options."

TAP WATER: AS SAFE AS BOTTLED

Contrary to what beverage companies would like you to believe, studies show that bottled water is no safer than tap water, but it is more environmentally destructive. Americans use and landfill 25.3 million single-use water bottles each year, and companies are privatizing aquifers around the world for bottled water sales, exacerbating community water crises.

However, contaminants can make their way into your drinking water, so your safest option is to use a filter. First, find out what's actually in your water by obtaining your local water utility's "Consumer Confidence Report," which compares contaminant levels in your water to national standards. If you use well water, find a state-certified lab to test it annually by calling the EPA's Safe Water Hotline at 800/426-4791. Then, turn to our Heal Your Home Center article, "The Facts About Water Filters," to help you find the best filter options.

For water on the go, avoid wasteful, single-use plastic and try a reusable steel Klean Kanteen bottle or aluminum SIGG-brand bottle instead (see p. 13).

* **Notice the boldface terms?** They're examples of toxins found in the home—see p. 20 for a glossary defining each.

** **Find green products and services** to help you take all of these steps in our *National Green Pages*™, available for \$9.95 + shipping by calling 800/58-GREEN, or free online at www.greenpages.org. Look for the "National Green Pages Category" subheading in each box.

4 Steps to a Healthy Kitchen

1 AVOID PESTICIDES; GO ORGANIC

THE PROBLEM: Many conventional fruits and vegetables carry pesticide residues. Twenty-three of the world's 28 most commonly used pesticides are suspected carcinogens, and several are possible neurotoxins and **endocrine disrupters**.


Consuming conventional dairy products and meat can expose you to the hormones used on food animals, which may be linked to endocrine disruption.

May be linked to: cancer, endocrine disruption.

THE SOLUTION: Buy organic when you can—organic foods are grown without toxic pesticides. If you're on a tight budget, avoid conventional fruits and vegetables that carry the highest amounts of pesticide residue: apples, bell peppers, celery, cherries, imported grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, potatoes, raspberries, spinach, and strawberries.

Eating organic also gives your immune system a boost—a study at the University of California-Davis, found that organic produce had 19–50 percent more cancer-fighting antioxidants that conventional produce.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES™ CATEGORY: “Food.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER** (online at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome): “Eat Less Meat; Cool the Planet” and our “Good Food” issue of *Co-op America Quarterly*.



2 BE FUSSY ABOUT YOUR FISH


THE PROBLEM: Some fish can contain **mercury** and **polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**. Some experts say that FDA and EPA fish consumption limits, established to keep pregnant women and children safe, are too lax.

May be linked to: developmental disorders, cancer.

THE SOLUTION: To find fish low in mercury and PCBs, and to avoid supporting fishing practices that harm the environment, download our “Safe Seafood Wallet Card” at our online Heal Your Home Center. Also, look to plant sources of the healthy omega-3s found in fish, including walnuts, flax seeds, and oils.

ECO-BONUS: Buying sustainably caught fish helps discourage environmentally unsound catching methods, like bottom-trawling and fish farming, which contribute to the decline of our oceans.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: “Fish.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** “Safe, Sustainable Seafood.” This article contains our “Safe Seafood Wallet Card,” which you can take with you to restaurants and the grocery store.

3

BAN PLASTICS #3,6, AND 7

THE PROBLEM: Hard-to-recycle plastics often contain toxins that can leach into food and water, especially when heated.

#3: Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics, marked as #3, contain plastic-softening **phthalates**, like **DEHP**. Some plastic wraps are made from PVC, as well as vegetable oil bottles and some flexible plastic containers.

#6: Styrofoam take-out containers are often made from **polystyrene** (#6), which is considered a possible human carcinogen by the World Health Organization.

#7: And clear, hard **polycarbonate** (#7) plastic is often used in sport water bottles and baby bottles, among other products. This plastic often contains **bisphenol-A**. (#7 is a catch-all category, so plant-based plastics are labeled #7 as well, but do not contain bisphenol-A.)

May be linked to: cancer, endocrine disruption.

THE SOLUTION: Get rid of #3, #6, and clear, hard #7 plastics—especially those that might be used by children. Single-use beverage bottles are typically made from #1 (PETE) and #2 (HDPE) plastics, which are generally considered safe for one-time use. However, studies indicate that **DEHP** may leach from PETE bottles after repeated use. Most plastic food storage containers are #5 and are considered safe.

All plastics can leach in the long term, so it's best to avoid plastic altogether and choose glass or ceramic containers instead. When you do use plastic, avoid microwaving foods or putting hot food or drinks in them—heat promotes leaching. Instead of plastic water bottles, try a reusable, stainless steel Klean Kanteen bottle, available at REI stores and ReusableBags.com, or a SIGG-brand bottle, made from aluminum with a water-based inner liner to prevent leaching, available at Whole Foods stores and NubiusOrganics.com.

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** “Greener Paths for Plastics.”

4

BE CAUTIOUS WITH YOUR COOKWARE

THE PROBLEM: Non-stick pans with Teflon or Teflon-like coatings contain **polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE)** and **perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)**, which break down into the air at high temperatures.

Aluminum can also find its way into your food through cookware. Though exposure to aluminum has not been linked definitively to any adverse effects like Alzheimer's disease, it is thought wise to avoid extra exposure.

Linked to: cancer.

THE SOLUTION: Stainless steel and cast iron are both safe alternatives to non-stick and aluminum pans. Non-stick anodized aluminum pans have a layer of aluminum oxide to prevent aluminum leaching.



BRING IN THE PLANTS!

House plants don't just look green—they are an affordable, easy way to help clean indoor air, according to NASA research. Spider plants and fig trees both reduce formaldehyde; English ivy helps to tackle the air impact of petroleum-based products; and aloe vera, chrysanthemum, Chinese evergreen, bamboo palm, and lilies help in a variety of ways to clean up indoor air.

The one room where potted plants may not be a good idea is the bedroom—mold and allergens in the soil may irritate those with allergies.

3 Steps to a Healthy Bathroom

1 TRASH CONVENTIONAL BODY CARE PRODUCTS

THE PROBLEM: More than one-third of all personal care products contain at least one ingredient linked to cancer, and very few products are tested for safety. Some products contain **phthalates**, which don't appear in the list of a product's ingredients—instead, they are covered by the general term “fragrance.” Other troublesome ingredients include coal tar, which is made from petroleum waste; **Diethanolamine (DEA)**; **1,4-Dioxane**; and **parabens**. (See the “Crazy Eight” box on the next page for more problematic body care ingredients.)

May be linked to: endocrine disruption, skin problems, cancer.

THE SOLUTION: Look for body care products from one of the 600 retailers that have signed the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics' Compact at www.safecosmetics.org/companies/signers.cfm. These companies, including several of Co-op America's Green Business Network™ members, have pledged to phase out the 450 chemicals banned by the European Union in 2005 because they're strongly suspected of being mutagens, carcinogens, or endocrine disrupters. You can also search the EWG's Skin Deep Cosmetic Safety Database at www.cosmeticdatabase.com to learn about the products in your shelves.

ECO-BONUS: Your green body care purchases help stop environmental contamination of our waterways. Buying organic supports sustainable, pesticide-free agriculture.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES™ CATEGORY: “Body Care.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER** (online at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome): “The Ugly Side of Cosmetics.”



CANDLES: GET THE LEAD OUT

Some candles still have wicks with **lead** cores to make them sturdier. Lead is a potent neurotoxicant.

When shopping for a candle, look for a “lead-free” label. If it doesn't have one, you can rub the tip of an unburnt candle wick on a piece of paper. If it leaves a mark, there's a lead core in the wick. This method doesn't work with candles that have been lit already, so when in doubt, throw them out.

2 AVOID CHEMICAL AIR FRESHENERS

THE PROBLEM: Air fresheners can contain dangerous ingredients like **dichlorobenzene**, **naphthalene**, and **formaldehyde**.

Conventional scented candles aren't much better—many are made from petroleum-based paraffin wax, which releases carcinogenic soot when burned, and some have **lead-core** wicks, which release toxic lead into the air when burned.

Linked to: respiratory irritation, cancer.

THE SOLUTION: Avoid candles and air fresheners with synthetic fragrances. Instead, leave a bowl of baking soda out to absorb odors, and switch from paraffin to 100 percent beeswax or soy candles with cotton wicks. To test a candle wick for lead, follow our tips (left).

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORIES: “Aromatherapy” and “Candles.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** “Are Your Candles Toxic?”

FIND BETTER BODY CARE—OR MAKE YOUR OWN!

Given the lack of government oversight when it comes to chemicals in body care products, it's worth it to look for the least toxic alternatives. Barring that, make your own!

Two books show you how to do just that with simple, natural, easy-to-obtain ingredients: *Better Basics for the Home*, by Annie B. Bond (Three Rivers Press, 2001), and *The Take-Charge Beauty Book* (Organica Press, 2001), by Aubrey Hampton and Susan Hussey.

When you shop, look for body care products from the companies that have signed the Compact for Safe Cosmetics: www.safecosmetics.org/companies.signers.cfm. These retailers have pledged to phase out 450 toxic chemicals banned in Europe.

The campaign also offers resources and recipes to host a Make Your Own Cosmetics party, free online at www.safecosmetics.org/action/materials.cfm.

3

PURGE PVC FROM YOUR SHOWER CURTAIN—AND ELSEWHERE

THE PROBLEM: Polyvinyl chloride, also known as PVC or the “vinyl” in your vinyl shower curtain, is a plastic that’s dangerous to people and the environment at every stage of its lifecycle. **DEHP**, an additive used to soften many vinyl products, is a **phthalate**.

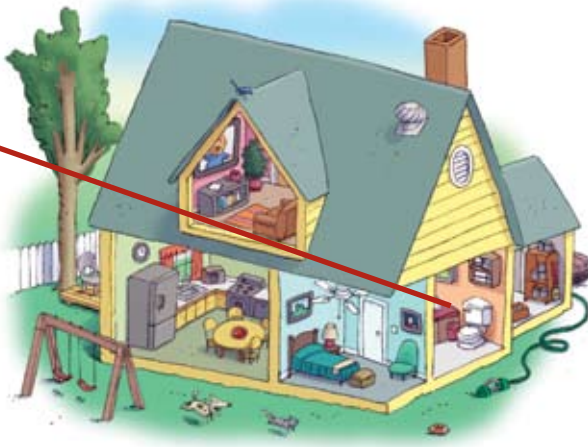
Linked to: endocrine disruption, reproductive toxicity, cancer.

THE SOLUTION: Avoid PVC products for your bathroom or anywhere in your home—PVC is often recognizable by its distinctive odor (think that “new shower curtain” smell).

When shopping for a shower curtain, look for a non-vinyl one. Ikea (www.ikea.com) and Vita Futura (www.vitafutura.com) both make polyethylene vinyl acetate (PEVA) liners, which are PVC-free. You can also get a hemp curtain from green companies like Rawganique.com and Greenfeet.com—hemp dries quickly and is resistant to mildew.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORIES: “Hemp,” “Housewares,” and “Toys.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** “Greener Paths for Plastics.”



CRAZY EIGHT: AVOID THESE EIGHT TOXINS IN YOUR BODY CARE PRODUCTS

When you shop for body and hair care products, avoid the following eight problematic ingredients:

1. Placenta: Extracts from human and cow placenta can condition skin and hair. These extracts in cosmetics give the body a slug of hormones that may be enough to spur breast growth in toddlers, according to a few recent studies.

2. Mercury: Mercury damages brain function at low levels, and it's still used in cosmetics, sometimes as the mercury preservative “thimerosal.”

3. Lead: This neurotoxicant is in Grecian Formula 16 and other black hair dyes for men. Listed as “lead acetate.”

4. “Fragrance”: Fragrances are the great secrets of the cosmetics industry—in everything from shampoo to deodorant to lotion—and falling straight into a giant loophole in federal law that doesn't require companies to list on product labels any of the potentially hundreds of chemicals in a single product's secret fragrance mixture.

Fragrances can contain neurotoxins and hormone disrupters, and are among the top five allergens in the world.

5. Hydroquinone skin lightener:

Take a cue from FDA's recent warning, and avoid skin lighteners with hydroquinone. This skin bleaching chemical can cause a skin disease called ochronosis, with “disfiguring and irreversible” blue-black lesions that in the worst cases become permanent.

6. Nanoparticles: These untested ingredients that can slide up the optic nerve to the brain or burrow inside red blood cells. Companies don't have to tell us that they're in our products, though the EWG found that more than one-third of all products contain ingredients now commercially available in nano forms.

7. Phthalates: Whether it's sperm damage, feminization of baby boys, or infertility, a growing number of studies link phthalates

to problems in men and boys. Pregnant women should avoid it in nail polish (“dibutyl phthalate”), and everyone should avoid products with “fragrance” on the label, chemical mixtures where phthalates often hide.

8. Petroleum by-products: Meet the workhorse chemicals of the cosmetics industry—petroleum byproducts, and the cancer-causing impurities that often contaminate them. These ingredients include carcinogens in baby shampoo (i.e. 1,4-dioxane) and petrochemical waste called coal tar in scalp treatment shampoos.

—Excerpted with permission from the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep campaign, 2021667-6982, www.ewg.org. To find out how toxic mainstream-brand body care products are, visit EWG's SkinDeep database at www.skindeep.org.

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2 Steps to a Healthy Bedroom

1

CHOOSE BETTER BEDCLOTHES

THE PROBLEM: Toxic chemicals that resist flames, water, moths, stains, soil, and wrinkles are sometimes added to textiles like bedclothes. Labels such as “permanent-press,” “no-iron,” “water repellent,” and “flame retardant” may indicate fabric treatments that off-gas chemicals like **formaldehyde** and **perfluorochemicals (PFCs)**.

May be linked to: respiratory and skin irritation, cancer, developmental damage.

THE SOLUTION: Choose organic fabric sheets and covers without any chemical finishers. Most bedclothes will not be labeled with information about finishers, so call the manufacturer and ask—or choose bedclothes that advertise as “chemical-free.” Also, avoid fabrics with a “new” smell that may indicate chemical treatments.

ECO-BONUS: Organically grown cotton is grown without pesticides that can harm workers and the environment (though those particular chemicals won’t reach you in conventional cotton products).

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES™ CATEGORY: “Bedding/Futons/Mattresses.”

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER** (online at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome): “The Allergen-Free Bedroom.”



2

MIND YOUR MATTRESS

THE PROBLEM: Federal laws require mattresses to be fire resistant, so many manufacturers treat the mattress foam with flame-retardant chemicals. The most dangerous are **polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)**, which some manufacturers are phasing out voluntarily.

Mattresses and pads made of petroleum-based polyester, nylon, and polyurethane foam (including “memory” foam) can off-gas **VOCs**. The water-repellants and stain-resistant finishes used on many mattresses, and on some plywood or particleboard boxsprings, may off-gas **formaldehyde**.

May be linked to: endocrine disruption, cancer, neurotoxicity.

THE SOLUTION: Choose mattresses stuffed with natural, nontoxic, and organic materials, and untreated with flame-retardant PBDEs or other chemical finishes. (If this information is not on the tag, call the manufacturer.) Mattresses with a layer of flame-retardant wool may be more affordable than all-organic mattresses. If you can’t replace your mattress, minimize off-gassing fumes by covering it with an impermeable encasement intended for allergy sufferers, by vacuuming frequently, by ventilating the room, and by using a HEPA air filter.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: “Bedding/Futons/Mattresses.”

4 Steps to a Healthy Home Exterior

1

AVOID VINYL (PVC) SIDING

THE PROBLEM: Home siding can be the single largest use of vinyl, made from **PVC*** plastic, in a home. (See p. 15 for more on PVC inside your home.) Vinyl siding often contains **DEHP**, an additive and a **phthalate**. And the manufacture and incineration of PVC releases dangerous pollution.

May be linked to: endocrine disruption, reproductive toxicity, cancer.

THE SOLUTION: When it's time to buy new siding for your house, choose one of the many non-vinyl siding alternatives available, from aluminum to polypropylene.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES™ CATEGORY:** "Building Supply."



CHOOSE SAFE PLAY SAND

Another risk may be present in the playground's sandbox. SafeSand[™], a member of Co-op America's Green Business Network[™], works to educate parents about crystalline silica, a carcinogenic dust often contained in play sand. For safe, nontoxic play sand, call SafeSand at 415/971-1776, or visit www.safesand.com.

2

TAKE CARE WITH EXTERIOR PAINTS

THE PROBLEM: Like paints used indoors (see p. 11), exterior paints can off-gas **volatile organic compounds (VOCs)**, and may contain fungicides or biocides. In exterior paints, VOCs are less likely to be inhaled, reducing the paint's health risks, but these VOCs can still cause smog and damage the ozone layer.

THE SOLUTION: Pick a zero- or very low-VOC exterior paint. All exterior paints need fungicides to prevent mold, so choose an exterior paint that contains the least-toxic paint fungicide: zinc oxide. Avoid oil-based paints and choose instead an acrylic, latex, or recycled water-based paint. Least-toxic exterior paints include: DuraSoy No-VOC Interior/Exterior Paint, American Pride No-VOC Interior/Exterior Primer, and AFM[™] Safecoat Low-VOC Exterior Satin.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORY: "Paints."

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER** (online at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome): "Nontoxic Paints and Stains"

* **Notice the boldface terms?** They're examples of toxins found in the home—see p. 20 for a glossary defining each.

** **Find green products and services** to help you take all of these steps in our *National Green Pages*[™], available for \$9.95 + shipping by calling 800/58-GREEN, or free online at www.greenpages.org. Look for the "National Green Pages Category" subheading in each box.



3

REDUCE YOUR PESTICIDE USE

THE PROBLEM: Too many homeowners needlessly use hazardous chemicals on their lawns, and these chemicals can drift into their homes and pollute indoor air. Of 30 commonly used lawn pesticides, 19 are linked with cancer or carcinogenicity, 15 with neurotoxicity, and 11 with hormone disruption, according to the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns. Many also pollute groundwater, and most are toxic to wildlife.

May be linked to: cancer, reproductive toxicity, neurotoxicity, endocrine disruption.

THE SOLUTION: In many American yards, pesticide use is unnecessary and excessive. For least-toxic approaches to lawn care, see www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/resources.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES

CATEGORY: "Landscaping/Lawn Care."

4

WATCH YOUR WOODEN DECK AND PLAYSETS

THE PROBLEM: Until a few years ago, pressure-treated wood for decks and play equipment was routinely covered in **chromium copper arsenate (CCA)** to kill insects and prevent rot. CCA leaches **arsenic** that sticks to hands and is absorbed through skin. The wood industry voluntarily agreed to stop selling CCA-treated wood for most residential uses in 2005, but older decks and playground sets may still be coated in poison.

May be linked to: cancer, developmental damage.

THE SOLUTION: If your wooden deck or play equipment was built before 2005, obtain a test kit from the Environmental Working Group to test for arsenic (www.ewg.org/reports/poisonwoodrivals/orderform). If there is arsenic present, consider replacing the items, or at least the parts like handrails and steps that people often touch. Using a table cloth on older wooden picnic tables, applying wood sealant every six months, and regular handwashing after playing outside can limit arsenic exposure. (Clear sealants are most toxic—look for a wood sealant with the darkest pigmentation.)

Also test soil surrounding an older wood deck or play equipment—you may need to replace it with a safer ground cover if the soil contains unsafe levels of arsenic. And avoid storing any tools or toys outdoors near arsenic-treated wood.

NATIONAL GREEN PAGES CATEGORIES: "Building Supply," "Paints."

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** "Green Hands on Deck."

TOXIC TOYS

As the recent toy recalls made all too clear, toxins still find their way into children's toys sold in the US. The Ecology Center and the Washington Toxics Coalition have joined forces to help parents choose the safest toys for their children. The two organizations have been testing popular toys for toxins like **lead**, **arsenic**, **mercury**, and **phthalates**, and they've created a user-friendly database to display the results. Go to HealthyToys.org to see how safe your child's mainstream-brand toys are.

To find safe toys made by companies that go the extra mile for people and the planet, purchase from one of Co-op America's Green Business Network™ members. Consult the "Toys" category of our *National Green Pages*™, available for \$9.95 + shipping by calling 800/58-GREEN or free online at www.greenpages.org.

 **HEAL YOUR HOME CENTER:** "Beyond Lead: Toxins in Toys" and "Ten Green Toys for 2008."

1,4-Dioxane: (a.k.a. *iethylene dioxide, diethylene ether, dioxan, p-dioxane, or just “dioxane”*) Used as a coolant in cars and as a foaming agent in some body care products, including baby shampoo. A recognized carcinogen and a suspected blood, gastrointestinal, immune, kidney, nerve, respiratory, and skin toxicant.

Aluminum: A lightweight metal used in cooking utensils and beverage containers. A suspected blood, nerve, reproductive, and respiratory toxicant. Suggestions that ingested aluminum may have some link to Alzheimer’s disease are inconclusive.

Arsenic: A recognized carcinogen and developmental toxicant. Suspected of being toxic to the human blood, endocrine, gastrointestinal, immune, nerve, reproductive, respiratory, and skin systems.

Arsenic disulfide: Used as a pesticide on produce. A recognized carcinogen and developmental toxicant.

Benzyl benzoate: A common insecticide for lice and mites, as well as a food additive, a fragrance fixative, and plasticizer. A suspected neurotoxin.

Bisphenol-A: Used to make transparent, hard plastic known as polycarbonate (#7), such as baby bottles and the lining of infant formula cans. Exposure may cause prostate cancer, breast cancer, female infertility, endocrine disruption, and obesity.

Chromium copper arsenate (CCA): A compound that was once used on pressure-treated wood. Leaches arsenic.

Crystalline silica: (a.k.a. “*silica gel*”) Usually found in a small packet serving as a desiccant. Packaged with items that might mold or spoil when wet, and a component in play sand. A known carcinogen and a suspected toxin to the gastrointestinal, kidney, and respiratory systems. Fine silica can hurt the respiratory tract if inhaled, but presents a low threat in skin care products and in food.

DEHP: (aka *Bis(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate, BEHP, di-2-ethyl hexyl phthalate, dioctyl phthalate, or DOP*) A liquid plasticizer used in hydraulic fluids and PVC (#3) plastic. While DEHP cannot cause harm through skin contact, when ingested it can damage reproductive organs, the lungs, kidneys, and liver, and fetuses.

Dichlorobenzene: Used in mothballs, urinal “cakes,” and other disinfectants designed to control moss and mildew. A suspected carcinogen.

Diethanolamine (DEA): (a.k.a. *bis(hydroxyethyl)amine, diethylolamine, hydroxydiethylamine, diolamine, and 2,2'-iminodiethanol*) Colorless crystals used in cosmetics, where it is suspected of combining with another common chemical to produce highly carcinogenic nitrosamines. Alone, it’s a suspected carcinogen and a suspected toxicant to the blood, gastrointestinal, kidney, nerve, respiratory, and skin systems. Damages fetal development in mice.

Dioxin: (a.k.a. *Dioxine, TCDBD, TCDD, 2,3,7,8-TCDD*) A byproduct of chlorine manufacture and PVC incineration. A recognized carcinogen and developmental toxicant, and suspected of being toxic to blood, endocrine, gastrointestinal, immune, kidney, nerve, reproductive, respiratory, and skin systems.

Endocrine disruptors: The endocrine system regulates hormones and the glands that secrete those hormones in the body. Endocrine disruptors (a.k.a. *endocrine disrupting compounds, endocrine modifiers, or hormone disruptors*) are chemicals that interfere with the endocrine system by mimicking or inhibiting natural hormones. They can cause reproductive damage and have been implicated in cancers of the reproductive system.

Formaldehyde: (a.k.a. *methanal, methyl aldehyde, or methylene oxide*) A smelly colorless gas found in pesticides as well as in consumer products and building materials. A recognized carcinogen and suspected gastrointestinal, immune, nerve, reproductive, respiratory, and skin toxicant.

Hormone Disrupters: See *endocrine disruptors*.

Lead: A heavy, soft grey metal once used widely in paints. It is now illegal as a paint ingredient over 660 ppm, though it may legally be mixed into other products, like jewelry. Some imported toys containing lead have recently raised alarms about children’s exposure. A recognized carcinogen and neurological, developmental, and reproductive toxicant. Also suspected of being toxic to people’s blood, endocrine, gastrointestinal, immune, kidney, respiratory, and skin systems.

Mercury: A heavy metal recognized as a developmental toxicant and suspected of being toxic to humans’ blood, endocrine, gastrointestinal, immune, kidney, nerve, reproductive, respiratory, and skin systems. People are most likely to be exposed to mercury by eating contaminated fish and by drinking contaminated water.

Naphthalene: (a.k.a. *naphthalin, tar camphor, or white tar*) Used in many dyes and as a fumigant in household products such as mothballs, where it gives them their signature smell. A recognized carcinogen and a suspected toxicant to the blood, developmental, gastrointestinal, nerve, respiratory, and skin systems.

Parabens: Parabens are widely used as preservatives in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, and are found in toothpaste, shampoo, moisturizers, and shaving gels. Suspected of toxicity to skin. Some studies have linked parabens to cancer and to endocrine disruption.

Perfluorochemicals (PFCs): PFCs are widely used in well-known consumer brands including Teflon, Stainmaster, Scotchgard, and Gore-Tex (they have subsequently been phased out of Scotchgard). Laboratory studies on animals have linked them to several cancers, thyroid problems, damage to the immune system, reproductive problems, and birth defects.

Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA): (a.k.a. *C8*) Used in the manufacture of nonstick cookware such as Teflon, Gore-Tex fabric, and StainMaster carpet. PFCs in microwave popcorn bags may form PFOA when ingested. A persistent, bioaccumulative chemical that may be linked to cancer, heart disease, and immune system damage.

Phenol: (a.k.a. *carbolic acid, hydroxybenzene, monohydroxybenzene, phenyl alcohol, or phenyl hydroxide*) A crystalline solid widely used in antiseptic sprays and cleaners, paint removers, and disinfectants. Suspected of being toxic to people’s blood, developmental, gastrointestinal,

kidney, nerve, reproductive, skin, and respiratory systems.

Phthalates: Commonly used as softeners in polyvinyl chloride (PVC), other soft plastics, and in a variety of beauty and skin care products. Studies have identified phthalates as endocrine disruptors. Phthalates may also cause liver and kidney lesions, lead to a higher risk of certain cancers, and may exacerbate asthma and allergies in children.

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs): PBDEs were commonly used as fire retardants in foam furniture until 2005, when the most commonly used form was banned. PBDEs are neurotoxins that bioaccumulate, building up in people’s bodies over time. New carpet padding may likely still contain PBDEs, and PBDEs have been found in many fish.

Polycarbonate (#7) plastic: A transparent, hard, unbreakable plastic that offgasses *bisphenol-A*, a suspected endocrine disrupter.

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs): Cancer-causing, persistent chemicals that were once used widely as coolants, fire retardants, and additives in paints and pesticides. PCBs were banned in the United States in 1976, but they persist in the environment, contaminating a number of animals, particularly farmed salmon. Salmon with PCBs can be a carcinogen to those who eat them, and a neurotoxin to fetuses when pregnant women eat salmon.

Polystyrene (#6) plastic: The white “foam” commonly used for packing peanuts, protective packaging, and “clamshell” take-out containers. May leach some benzene, a known carcinogen, into the food when heated. Difficult to recycle and very slow to biodegrade.

Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE): This is the resin coating associated with Teflon brand and other non-stick cookware. It breaks down at high temperatures into chemicals linked to neurotoxicity, respiratory damage, and human polymer fume fever. May be harmful to pets.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC): (a.k.a. *vinyl or #3 plastic*) Generates carcinogenic dioxin when manufactured and incinerated. In its pliable plastic form, it can leach phthalates, which are endocrine disruptors.

Quaternary ammonium compounds: (a.k.a. *quaternary ammonium cations or quats*) are used widely in disinfectants, fabric softeners, and pesticides. A respiratory irritant.

Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS): (a.k.a. *sodium dodecyl sulfate, sulphate, SDS, or NaDS*) Used as a foaming agent in toothpaste, shampoo, shaving creams, and bubble baths, and as a tick repellent in pet products. A suspected gastrointestinal and liver toxicant.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs): Any one of a category of chemicals that are chemically volatile—that is, they evaporate into the air and react to sunlight, forming ground-level ozone and damaging indoor air quality. (“Organic” here is a scientific term indicating that the chemical contains carbon.) VOCs pose a particular risk of developmental damage to infants and fetuses. Some commonly used VOCs include formaldehyde and other endocrine disruptors.

—Sources for this glossary include *Environmental Defense’s Scorecard.org* database and the *Environmental Working Group’s* scientific research.

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Answers from *the Experts*

Physicians, university researchers, toxicologists, reporters, and green living experts agree that we need to take more care with which chemicals we're putting into consumer products—and into our bodies and the environment. We asked several experts for their take on the reasoning behind the Precautionary Principle, the usefulness of individual action when it comes to toxins in consumer products, and the joys of nontoxic living. Here's what they had to say. ...

Can **Keeping a Healthy Home** be a Joyful Practice?

Can green living be a joyful practice, or is it just another chore to add to our already too-busy lives? Author Annie B. Bond (a.k.a. Annie Berthold-Bond), executive producer of Care2.com's Green Living channels, answers that keeping a nontoxic home has enriched her life, protected her family, and earned her a following of readers who swear by her clean and green alternatives to common consumer products.

Recently named one of the top 20 environmental leaders by Body + Soul magazine, Annie brings over 20 years of experience as a leading authority about the connections between the environment, personal health, and well-being. One of Co-op America's most trusted green living experts, Annie's formidable research and rock-solid advice has often been featured in Co-op America Quarterly and our Real Money newsletter. Our editors love, loan, and enthusiastically recommend the four books she's written: Home Enlightenment (Rodale Press, 2005), Better

Basics for the Home (Three Rivers Press, 1999), Clean & Green (Ceres Press, 1990), and The Green Kitchen Handbook (HarperCollins, 1997).

Annie talked with Co-op America associate editor Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist about her struggles with multiple chemical sensitivity, the beauty in making one's home a sanctuary from chemical exposures, and the changes everyone should make at home to protect his/her family.

CAQ/Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist: How did you become an expert on nontoxic living?

Annie B. Bond: I was poisoned by two back to back incidents in 1980 and early 1981. One was a gas leak at a restaurant where I was working—it sent 80 people to the hospital and gave me central nervous system damage, which started my immune system collapse. Then our apartment was exterminated with a pesticide that's since been taken off the market because it's so neurotoxic. I suddenly got really sick and was in the hospital for three months.

It took me awhile to get properly diagnosed—back then people didn't really look at what chemicals could do to you. I was eventually treated by one of the first doctors who practiced environmental medicine, and I was able to ascertain that I had developed multiple chemical sensitivity, and that I needed to be in an environment that was free of petroleum-based hydrocarbons, pesticides, those kind of things. So I then had to figure out how to live in our world without any of those chemicals. That wasn't easy!

Once I was in clean air, my body did really well. I eventually got healthy enough to have a baby, and I live a normal life as long as I keep it within certain parameters.



Green living expert Annie Bond at her home in upstate New York.

CAQ/Sarah: How long did it take you to get healthy again?

Annie: It took me about six years to get healthy. I need to live in a very isolated way because I need to be away from pesticide drift. I moved ten times in four years. I'd think I had it right and a neighbor would go out and spray a tree, and the wind would blow it towards our house. I was so sensitive at the time that I couldn't be near any of it.

So from that scary period in my life—which was just as isolating and bizarre as could possibly be, like something out of a science fiction story—I've gotten to a point where nobody would know how unique our home is.

I probably have the least toxic home of anybody in the US. But it appears totally normal to everyone else because you *can* do everything the way I *need* to do it.

CAQ/Sarah: What were the first things you changed?

Annie: I actually don't like to clean very much, but I had to learn how to clean without using commercial products, for example. We'd move into a house and there might be a floor waxed with scented wax, so I'd have to figure out how to get that stuff off.

A lot of my research was also about how to help my family so I could visit their homes. My mother-in-law at the time was a constant sprayer, so if I wanted to visit her and feel well, I had to substitute natural air fresheners for her. My mother was a mothball aficionado, so I made her herbal, moth-repelling sachets. That's where I got into this very practical level of helping people live this way.

And even though I had to do this for my own health, I knew I was also keeping my daughter healthy. Our life was beautifully protective for her. A lot of the time, she was hugely resistant, but now she's in college, and gets a lot of questions about her lifestyle. Everything else seems so odd to her now that she's lived this way.

CAQ/Sarah: Should people without chemical sensitivity embrace your very comprehensive way of nontoxic living, which you detail in your books?

Annie: I'll never forget a doctor telling me how lucky I was that I had multiple chemical sensitivity—because if not, I would live my life around these chemicals and 30 years later come down with a terrible disease like cancer. That's a very good reason for people to not overexpose themselves to chemicals, because you never know.

The woman who cleaned my house when I was growing up died of bladder cancer—is that because she was breathing in cleaning chemicals all the time? Who knows, but she had a higher risk of that.

Really, what happened to me could have happened to anybody ... anybody could overdo trying to get a wax off of a floor and inhale solvents.

I like to use a barrel analogy: Imagine everything you breathe going into a barrel. Ultimately what happened to me is that my barrel filled up and overflowed because I was exposed to too much. So if you see it that way, everything makes a difference. Every little bit of chemicals that you don't use helps keep your barrel from overflowing.

Also, it's a very beautiful thing to make your home a sanctuary in terms of chemical exposure. What many people don't realize is that the on-edge feeling they get when they've been cleaning is because most of the chemicals used in household products are neurotoxic, so they're

agitating their central nervous system.

I'm a total believer in the Precautionary Principal. I never should have been exposed to that pesticide—it was inexcusable that something that toxic was on the market at the time.

CAQ/Sarah: How do you stay so upbeat?

Annie: For me, living this way has been spiritual. It's been learning to be more in my heart about it—because you can get so enraged at the state of things. Diverting your anger into good work always helps.

Finding beauty where it is helps, too. There are so many gifts that nature gives us for living our lives. A perfect example is linen. Imagine a hot August day—linen works with your body, lets your body breathe, and wicks moisture away, as opposed to polyester, which just feels like a plastic bag. It's a totally different experience when you work with nature as opposed to against it, and you have natural materials as your allies.

“I probably have the least toxic home in the US. But it appears normal to everyone else because you can do everything the way I need to do it.”

CAQ/Sarah: Where do you suggest people start in making their homes sanctuaries?

Annie: There are three things I suggest people do:


First, stop any pesticide use anywhere outside or inside your house. If you're in an apartment where the landlord won't stop, then consider moving. There are a lot of integrated pest management solutions to deal with pests.

Second, swap out cleaning products. Sort through your products and get rid of anything that carries a stronger signal word on the label than “caution.”

Third, stop using anything with synthetic perfumes. If something says “fragrance” in the ingredients list, that's almost a dead giveaway that it's synthetic. Doing this will likely get you into much more natural personal care products.

CAQ/Sarah: What is your advice to people who feel overwhelmed by making the switch to nontoxic everything?

Annie: You just have to keep telling yourself that you're doing the best you can. I remember hearing Jane Goodall give a talk, and someone asked her “What do you do with your grief?” And she said something that I think is absolutely true: “I just do my best every day.” If you do that, you get less overwhelmed. So you make better choices today—if you're buying cleaning products, you buy a safer one.

You can only do so much. Just do the best that you can every day. 





Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana

How Can We **Protect Our Children** from Endocrine Disrupters?

In the early 1990s, Dr. Theo Colburn caused a stir when she, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peter Meyers released the book *Our Stolen Future*, detailing their research on the effects endocrine disrupting chemicals were having on human health and the environment.

What are endocrine disrupters? Basically, “they’re chemicals that can affect the human body systems controlling hormone levels, growth, reproduction, maturation, development,” says Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana, a pediatrician and research scientist with the University of Washington, who studies the human health effects of these chemicals.

Colburn saw reproductive abnormalities happening in animals. Today, the links are growing stronger between endocrine disrupters like phthalates and bisphenol-A, and human health effects.

In animal studies, phthalate exposure during pregnancy leads to the “phthalate syndrome” in offspring, which includes male genital abnormalities such as hypospadias (abnormal placement of the urethral opening), cryptorchidism (incomplete testicular descent), decreased testicular weight, and others. “There has been an increase in the incidence of hypospadias and cryptorchidism in humans in the US and Europe, and it is hypothesized that this could be due to chemical exposures like phthalates or other endocrine disrupters,” says Sathyanarayana.

Bisphenol-A (BPA), another endocrine disrupter Sathyanarayana studies, mimics estradiol (similar to estrogen) in animal studies. BPA exposure in pregnancy has been associated with neurobehavioral outcomes in offspring such as hyperactivity, as well as prostate and breast tumors, and obesity.

There have been studies in pregnant mice in which BPA was associated with abnormal growth patterns in offspring, leading to obesity despite well-controlled diets, says Sathyanarayana. These studies suggest that endocrine or genetic changes are occurring over time, and they could be caused by chemicals that mimic natural hormones that help regulate, for example, how many fat cells a body makes or how much fat is stored in them.

Children and fetuses are especially vulnerable to endocrine disrupters and other toxins, because they are still growing and developing and may be exposed during sensitive periods of development.

“What happens to you *in utero* and in childhood

can significantly affect you later in life, because programming of our endocrine and reproductive systems occurs then,” says Sathyanarayana. Plus, she notes, “children are also very vulnerable to toxins because they breathe faster, engage in more hand-to-mouth play, and play close to the floor.” So per pound, they’re exposed to more of a given toxin than an adult is. However, even adults can be impacted, as endocrine disrupters have been linked to certain cancers.

Because it’s a relatively new science, links between chemicals on the market today and endocrine disruption are largely unproven. Therefore, these chemicals often find their way into our consumer products.

“Right now, we live in a risk world where we have to prove that something is *unsafe*,” says Sathyanarayana. “And to do that sometimes means proving that people will die, people will get cancer. That kind of endpoint doesn’t exist for endocrine disrupting chemicals—they give us smaller, gradual changes over time.”

Dr. Sathyanarayana recommends the following steps to help avoid exposure to endocrine disrupters:

- Wash or peel your produce to avoid pesticide residues. Buy organic as much as possible (see p. 12).

- Decrease the number of products you use on children’s skin; they rarely need more than a light soap.

- Use vinegar to clean instead of conventional cleaners. “It’s a safe chemical, and it works well!” she says.

- Limit your canned food and beverage consumption. The Environmental Working Group found BPA in over half of the 97 cans of name-brand fruit, vegetables, soda, and other common canned goods.

- Avoid heating food or drinks in plastic, and avoid #3 and clear, hard #7 plastics—they contain phthalates and BPA, respectively.

- Endocrine disrupters can show up in baby bottles, sippy cups, and toys, too.

Follow the recommendations in the box on the next page to help minimize children’s exposures.

“It absolutely matters what you do in your home,” says Sathyanarayana. “We can’t control everything, but we can certainly control the areas where children play the most.”

CAQ

—Tracy Fernandez
Rysavy



Glyn Jones/Corbis

Endocrine Disrupters in Baby Bottles, Sippy Cups

Babies are vulnerable to the effects of bisphenol-A (BPA), an endocrine disrupter that accumulates in their bodies, meaning that multiple exposures add up over time. Unfortunately, many babies are exposed again and again via toxic plastics used in bottles and formula cans. Experts recommend the following steps to protect your baby:

1. Avoid liquid formula: Formula cans are often lined with polycarbonate (#7) plastic, which contains BPA. In fact, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) found that “1 in 16 children fed ready-to-eat formula from steel cans would have BPA exposures that exceed doses found harmful in animal studies.”

If your baby isn't exclusively breastfed, feed him/her powdered formula instead.

2. Use safe bottles and sippy cups: Plastic bottles, and those with plastic liners, can leach chemicals into breast milk or formula. Some clear plastic bottles are made with #7 plastic, which can leach BPA. The Environment California Research & Policy Center published a report in 2007 that named bottles from Avent, Dr. Brown's, Evenflo, Gerber, and Playtex as being

worst offenders.

Evenflo makes a shatterproof glass bottle, and BornFree (www.bornfree.com) sells a BPA-free plastic bottle. Bottles made from plastics #1, #2, and #5, like select types from Medela and Evenflo, are considered safer choices, as well. Look for opaque plastic bottles—they don't contain BPA.

BPA can show up in sippy cups, too. Look for safer cups from BornFree, SIGG, and Kleen Kanteen (see p. 13).

3. Use bottles with clear nipples: Clear nipples on baby bottles are made of safe silicone. Opaque nipples can be made of latex, to which some babies may be allergic, or even PVC plastic, which contains hormone-disrupting phthalates.

4. Demand change from formula companies: EWG is demanding that formula manufacturers get the bisphenol-A out of their cans. Sign on to the campaign at www.ewg.org/node/25724.

5. Breastfeed whenever possible: No bottles or formula required! Studies show it bolsters immune systems, too.

6. Use caution with toys, too: Some toys—including baby teethingers—contain BPA or phthalates. See p. 19 for more details.

Should We Tolerate Toxic Cleaners at Work?

Chances are you spend hours somewhere besides your home that may be routinely cleaned with toxins: your workplace. The industrial-strength cleaners used in many offices are a danger to your health and are especially hazardous to the 4 million janitors in North America who are exposed to them all day, every day on the job.

Janitors each handle an average of 48 pounds of hazardous chemicals a year, estimates the Janitorial Pollution Prevention Project, and exposure levels from prolonged close proximity to toxic products can be many times the maximum safe exposure level. Common ingredients in cleaners may be linked to endocrine disruption, reproductive toxicity, cancer, and other health problems.

Six out of every 100 janitors lose work time each year, and the cleaning chemicals they use are implicated in fully 88 percent of these injuries, which include eye and skin irritation or burns, and respiratory damage caused by breathing chemical fumes. Perhaps related to the high levels of VOC exposure, janitors are one of two job categories that experience the highest rates of occupational asthma, according to the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*.

The good news is that highly toxic cleaning products simply aren't necessary to get office buildings clean. “Green cleaners are cost-competitive, perform just as well as more toxic alternatives, and are widely available through conventional suppliers,” states the Center for a New

American Dream's Responsible Purchasing Network (www.responsiblepurchasing.org), which helps institutional purchasers shift to greener choices.

Municipalities, building managers, office workers, and janitors are joining forces in many places to shift workplaces to greener cleaning products. A half dozen state and city governments across the country, starting with Massachusetts, have already issued specifications for greener cleaners for all of their municipal office buildings. And the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which represents 225,000 janitors in 29 American cities, is developing a set of green provisions for cleaning products that janitors can incorporate directly into collective bargaining agreements with their managers.

“Janitors face first-hand every day the potential dangers of toxic chemicals—and the risks to their health and safety are very clear,” says Valarie Long, national director of SEIU's Property Services Division. “That's why SEIU has worked with janitorial firms nationally to ensure nontoxic chemicals are used wherever possible and janitors receive the highest quality training in the safe handling of chemicals.”

—Joelle Novey



istockphoto

WEB EXCLUSIVE: To protect children, who are more vulnerable to toxic chemicals than adults, it's especially important that schools and day cares make the switch to green cleaners. For more on how schools can do so, and for resources that can make schools and offices safer and greener for everyone, especially janitors, see our Web exclusive at www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome.





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What's Climate Change Got to Do With It?

We know that the chemicals we put into our air and water are affecting human health and the environment. But is there a climate change link? Dr. Catherine Karr says yes, and she's undertaking research to prove it.

Dr. Karr is a pediatrician with a doctoral degree in epidemiology and an Assistant Professor with the University of Washington Department of Pediatrics. Her research involves a large study of the impact of ambient air pollution on infant and child respiratory health. The following is from a conversation we had with Dr. Karr about her work.

As physicians, what we deal with day to day are the “new morbidities.” My more gray-haired colleagues and the people who trained them will tell you that their top three issues used to be infectious disease, infectious disease, infectious disease. Like pneumonia, for example. Kids still get ear infections, but they don't get devastating infections that kill them the way they did before. Now what they get is asthma, ADHD, obesity, autism. There are higher rates of prematurity and low birth weights, which are associated with air pollution. These are the new morbidities, and they are epidemics.

They're also complex; they develop because of a concert of insults, including genetic and environmental factors and factors in the social environment. But certainly, the environment plays a role. Genes can't explain something that's changed so fast in 10–20 years. There haven't been enough generations to explain these sudden increases.

My work has been primarily around ambient air pollution and children's health. I look at what influences how much pollution is in the air—and climate change is certainly a factor here—and what happens when people are exposed to those pollutants.

There are a number of air pollutants related to traffic in the US that are a concern for human health. In terms of evidence base, there are two pollutants that rise to the top: ozone and fine particulate matter.

OZONE is a secondary pollutant—it doesn't come out of a car's tailpipe but is formed in the atmosphere when ingredients that do come out of the tailpipe combine with higher temperatures and other substances in the atmosphere. Climate experts agree that if we don't do anything about our greenhouse gas emissions, we're going to have more ozone.

Ozone affects kids as a respiratory toxin. Many studies show that higher levels of ozone result in

more visits to the hospital for asthma attacks, more respiratory infections, more visits to a general practitioner. There's even some suggestive data that kids are more likely to get asthma in the first place when exposed to higher ozone levels.

Overall, we've done a good job bringing down ozone levels across country, but climate change may compromise the progress made, and not only because of the higher temperatures. One of the other ingredients in ozone formation are VOCs (volatile organic compounds). Fuel-injected cars produce more VOCs at higher temperatures.


So with the increase in temperatures global warming will bring, we'll see more ozone in the air and more impacts on children's health.

PARTICULATE MATTER is the other air pollutant that is concerning from a health perspective. Particulate matter has been linked to higher infant mortality, increases in respiratory infections in children and adults, more hospital and clinic visits. There's also a relationship to adult cardiac disease. As with ozone, there may be an association between the onset of asthma and higher exposures to particulate matter.

How climate change affects particulate matter has been less well-documented. But some preliminary work suggests that some regions will have more particulate matter because of climate change.

In summary, it's likely that ozone and particulate matter will increase, barring any human activity to reduce emissions and control the factors that cause climate change.

Reducing our driving is a big step we can all take to reduce emissions and reduce air pollution. My kids walk and bike to school—I made that a priority. It's a great way to start the day: we get to have conversations that you can't have when you're zipping along in the car, we get exercise, and we feel a sense of community, saying hello to our neighbors as we ride. We even know all the cats on the way to school!

The way you set up your life really can make a difference. 

—Dr. Catherine Karr, as told to Co-op America



Dr. Catherine Karr

“With the increase in temperatures global warming will bring, we'll see more ozone in the air and more impacts on children's health.”



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Will the EU's New **REACH** Law Bring the Precautionary Principle to the World?

In 2006, after years of debate and negotiations, the European Parliament passed the new REACH law, or Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation, and Restriction of Chemicals. Standing in stark contrast to US policies on chemicals, REACH puts the burden of proof on industry to prove the safety of chemicals they are using in products sold in the European Union (EU)—and calls for the phase-out of the most problematic chemicals, even in the absence of total scientific certainty.

Experts say REACH will change the way corporations manufacture products for the EU market. But how will Europe's actions be felt here, in the US? Could REACH bring precaution to the world?

Europe's Path to Precaution

The European Union has been taking the chemical load inflicted on its citizens seriously for years. For example, a 2005 amendment to the EU Cosmetics Directive requires that body care products be subject to scientific review, and subsequent rules ban "CMRs," or known carcinogens, mutagens, and reproductive toxins, from cosmetics. The EU has also banned certain phthalates in children's toys, and it has restricted the use of hazardous chemicals in electronics manufactured in the EU.

While the EU has taken an industry-by-industry approach in the past, the unprecedented new REACH law taking effect this year will mandate health and environmental safety reviews of chemicals used across industries.

Under REACH, all chemicals manufactured or imported into the EU will have to be registered with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) in Helsinki. Companies must submit a technical dossier of their products' chemical make-up, and must submit chemical safety reports—which assess the potential toxicity as well as lifecycle exposure scenarios—for chemicals produced in quantities of ten tons or more. ECHA will then determine if further testing should take place or if the chemicals are safe for use.

"The most significant thing about REACH is that it plugs the loophole left open by TSCA," says Mark Schapiro, author of *Exposed: The Toxic Chemistry of Everyday Products and What's at Stake for American Power* (Chelsea Green, 2007). TSCA is the 1976 US Toxic Substances Control Act, which gave the EPA power to regulate the chemicals in US consumer products (with the exception of cosmetics). More than 60,000 chemicals were "grandfathered" into use when TSCA was passed and simply presumed safe, with no toxicity reviews at all.

"REACH requires a toxicity assessment of all those chemicals that are already on the market that have never been tested," says Schapiro.

Around 1,500 substances of "very high concern"—used in consumer products today—are expected to fall under REACH's "authorisation system," which maps out a plan to progressively replace these most dangerous



Using fake infants in strollers, activists protest the inclusion of toxic chemicals in consumer products. The protest took place outside of the Italian government offices in Rome, and is one of many across Europe that helped bring about the EU's new REACH law.

chemicals, which include CMRs; substances with persistent, bio-accumulative, and toxic properties; and other substances, such as endocrine disruptors, found to have serious effects on human health and the environment.

Companies will be required to get authorization for the continued use of such chemicals in cases where alternatives do not exist or human exposure is extremely limited.

Many believe that REACH will motivate companies to find greener alternatives to toxic chemicals.

"Already, greater regulation in the European Union in regard to cosmetics and electronics has shown that many of these products can be made without dangerous toxins," says Schapiro, "And companies are continuing to make a profit—in fact, Proctor and Gamble's profits increased the year after they removed phthalates from their cosmetics."

REACH isn't perfect, says Schapiro—lawmakers came to several compromises with industry to get the law passed, including lowering the amount of safety data required for chemicals produced in less than ten tons each year, and allowing companies to continue to use some chemicals connected with health problems, even when alternatives exist, if the producer can claim to "adequately control" them.

"REACH was the result of an enormous environmental struggle over years, with lobbying on every side of the issue," says Schapiro, "and it was weakened from its earliest incarnation. But in the end, they still came out with a measure that is enormously more comprehensive than the approach in the US."

What REACH Means for the US

While Americans continue to suffer an outdated regulatory system, we may become what Schapiro calls "accidental beneficiaries" of tighter control in Europe, as companies remove the most dangerous chemicals from their products to comply with EU regulations.

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CLASSIFIED ADS

How to place a classified ad: Send your ad copy and check to the Classified Ad Department at Co-op America (see address on p. 1, or e-mail robhanson@coopamerica.org for more details). Classified ads must be prepaid. Ads are \$50 for the first 25 words and \$1 for each additional word. The deadline for classified ads for the next issue of Co-op America Quarterly is April 1, 2008.

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- 2006 Annie E. Casey Foundation Families Count Award
- 2006 MS NAACP Jerry Mauldin Corporate Award
- 2007 Mississippi Home Corporation Paver Award



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“In business, it often makes sense to produce products to meet the highest standards required,” notes Schapiro. “Those used to be the standards of the US, but the European Union, which now offers a larger market than the US, is now setting the rules.”

But Schapiro and others point out that US consumers shouldn’t assume that EU regulations will keep them safe from toxic products. Because our environmental laws are more lax than REACH, companies could also choose to reformulate products for the EU and still sell the more toxic versions here in the US.

“It will depend on what’s cheaper to manufacture,” says Dr. Steven Gilbert, a toxicologist and author of *A Small Dose of Toxicology* (Informa Healthcare, 2004). “If it’s cheaper to reformulate for the EU and keep making the more toxic version of a product here in the US, we could become a dumping ground for hazardous chemicals.”


While REACH doesn’t necessarily protect Americans from exposure to toxins in consumer goods, it will

provide them with the first-ever look at the potential health effects of some of those toxins through the ECHA database. When ECHA makes a decision about a certain chemical—for example, restricting or banning the use of a substance shown to be linked to cancer—the decision will be published on ECHA’s Web site.

“Americans are going to see the level of protection they lack,” predicts Schapiro. “What are Americans going to think when they start looking at that list of chemicals that are either banned or restricted from use in the EU and are perfectly legal here in the US? I think that will really be a wake-up call. People will

realize that they are being exposed routinely to chemicals that their country does nothing about.”

Ultimately, Schapiro hopes that the example set by the EU will demonstrate that we don’t have to live each day surrounded by chemicals.

“When you learn about the toxic chemicals around you, it can be really easy to just flip out,” he says, “But the decisions made to include these dangerous chemicals do not have to happen—we can make different decisions. And what we see in REACH, and other directives in Europe in the past few years, is that it is being done; it’s entirely possible.” 

—Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist



TAKE ACTION: Demand Safe Cleaning Products

Every expert we talked to for this issue recommended avoiding conventional, chemical-based household and industrial cleaners, and with good cause. Not only have the ingredients in most cleaning products never been tested for safety, but manufacturers aren’t even required to tell us what those ingredients are. You’ll see no warning labels telling you that common ingredients in these products—like ammonium quaternary compounds, glycol ethers, and phthalates—are possibly linked to increased asthma rates, reproductive toxicity, and hormone disruption, respectively.

Co-op America has joined with Women’s Voices for the Earth to demand that Procter & Gamble, Clorox Co., Reckitt-Benckiser (makers of Lysol, Easy-Off, Resolve, and Mop & Glo brands), S.C. Johnson & Son, and Sunshine Makers Inc. (makers of Simple Green) make their cleaners safer for human health and the environment. Safe cleaning products are of special concern for women, who still do 70 percent of the household cleaning; janitors, who are routinely exposed to the chemicals in cleaning products throughout their workday; and children, whose tiny bodies are most vulnerable to the chemicals found where they live and play.

We’re calling on these five companies to replace the suspected toxins in their cleaners with better, safer, greener alternatives. We’re also asking the companies to fully disclose the ingredients in their products—even though federal law doesn’t require them to do so—so consumers can be better informed about our choices.

Sign the online petition to Procter & Gamble, Clorox, Reckitt-Benckiser, S.C. Johnson, and Sunshine Makers, Inc. at www.womenandenvironment.org.

For more information about the campaign, contact Women’s Voices for the Earth, 406/543-3747, www.womenandenvironment.org.

Learn more about the companies that make conventional cleaners at Co-op America’s ResponsibleShopper.org.



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“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context, the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed, and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action.”

—Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998



Paul Steel/Corbis

Precautionary Principle advocates celebrate its ten years of impact by asking:

Should We Appoint a Legal Guardian for Future Generations?

We told you about the Precautionary Principle and how it came into being ten years ago on pp. 6-9. Now, Carolyn Raffensperger—executive director of the Science and Environmental Health Network and the woman who co-convoked the Wingspread Conference, which birthed the Principle as we know it today—tells us what’s coming next. Her latest effort is to get US government officials to appoint a “Legal Guardian” for future generations, and she’s got the nation’s most prestigious law school on her side.

CAQ/Tracy Fernandez Rysavy: You convened the Wingspread Conference almost exactly ten years ago, where the Precautionary Principle as we know it came into being. You’ve said that while the Wingspread Statement (see above) gets at the core of the message of Precaution, there’s more to it that tells us how to take action.

Carolyn Raffensperger: The Wingspread Statement defines the Precautionary Principle as follows: In the face of uncertainty, the proponent of an activity has a responsibility to prevent harm, to prove that the activity is safe.

That’s all well and good, but then what? Building on the Wingspread Statement, we know there are five ways to take action:

1) SET GOALS. If you know what you want to head toward, you’ll get where you’re going. But if you define it badly or vaguely—as in “We are for progress”—that’s a recipe for disaster. “Progress” is whatever project I take on.

So you set a goal. For example, we know what the rate of increase has been in breast cancer over 30 years—since 1975, it has more than doubled. That can’t be genetic. The difference between my mother’s generation and my generation is not genetic; it must be something else. So we set the goal of finding out what the cause is and reducing that breast cancer rate.

2) THEN, LOOK AT ALTERNATIVES. If plastics or chemicals in the environment might be contributing to a rise

in cancer, let’s look for alternatives. Are there alternatives to lead in children’s toys? Yes! Are there alternatives to using nasty solvents in our computers and electronics? Yes!

3) REVERSE BURDEN OF PROOF. For the most part, there’s no obligation on the part of government or the company who’s manufacturing or using chemicals to test them and look for better alternatives. So say I’m injured by your chemical. We go to court, and I say your chemicals hurt me. And you say, “Can’t prove it.”

The courts will ask where the scientific basis for my accusation is, and there won’t be any, because there’s no obligation on the part of companies to test the chemicals they use for safety. It ends up being my responsibility to prove that the chemicals are hurting me. That is insane!

Through the Precautionary Principle, we would test all the chemicals we use or want to use for safety and disclose that information to the public. And you’re responsible if you make a mess.

The Precautionary Principle gives the benefit of the doubt to children, to the Earth, to the health and well-being of future generations of all species.

4) LOOK FOR EARLY WARNINGS. We will approve some substances, and then we’ll get more information. It’s important that as we do so, we heed early warnings. We need to put into place systems that look at signs like declining species, increased body burden of chemicals, increased asthma rates. And when we see that there may be a problem, the Precautionary Principle means taking protective action sooner rather than later.

5) Because we’re looking for the best alternative, the most protective action, science alone can’t make decision. We require AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS TO BE AT THE TABLE. It requires democracy. I get to stand up and say what I love. I get to stand up and say I have an alternative. I get to be at the table when decisions affect me and the things I love.

“The Precautionary Principle says there needs to be a place for all stakeholders in decision-making—and that includes future generations.”

Early critics of the Precautionary Principle said, “You’re going to stop all action.” The beauty of the Precautionary Principle is that it *requires* action to prevent harm: You start looking for alternatives. You start working toward your goals. You start requiring the person who is advocating for the new development, or importing toys, or using new paint to look ahead, to be responsible parties for their actions. Asking people to be responsible for their actions changes behavior.

CAQ/Tracy: What’s next for you and for SEHN’s work to get governments to implement the Precautionary Principle?

Carolyn: We’re working to expand on the part of the Precautionary Principle that says there needs to be a place for all stakeholders in decision-making—and that includes future generations.

Through the Precautionary Principle, we say, “This generation will refrain from doing harm to your generation to come. We will do for your generation what we want done for ours: we want clean air; clean water; healthy babies, polar bears and pollinators; healthy prairie ecosystems; and old redwoods. And we want those for you, too.”

So we’re actually trying to change laws to reflect the need to protect future generations, which includes all of us here and those to come. This is a continuum—it is not “them” and “us.” You and I also have a future, so we are representatives of this generation *and* the future. And all the future generations that will ever be born are present in the world today, in everyone’s eggs and sperm. The DNA is here already.

CAQ/Tracy: That’s a radical shift from the type of government oversight of chemicals we have in place now.

Carolyn: It is! The theory of government that most clearly reflects the Precautionary Principle is the idea that governments hold a primary function to serve as the trustee, not the owner, of the common wealth and the common health of this and future generations. What that means is government is to take care of the things we share—air, water, wildlife, agricultural seeds. They are not the owners, they are the stewards, caretakers—of national parks, public health, clean water—things I cannot protect on my own.

So what we are proposing is that the next US president should designate a “Legal Guardian for Future Generations” to evaluate policy decisions and proposals based on the impact they will have on future generations, and to speak on behalf of future generations.

Can you imagine having someone at the presidential cabinet level who would evaluate the budget, litigation at the Department of Justice, the national debt, and environmental regulations in light of what we’re going to leave to the people who will come after us? Our government is really good at evaluating proposals for their impact on business. We’re not good at looking at future generations.

CAQ/Tracy: A lot of people feel that way about the Earth on a personal level, but the idea of it at a federal level is a beautiful one.

Carolyn: Yes, many people are already fulfilling that idea, even if it hasn’t been given the name of Guardianship, like

river keepers, prairie restorers.

And in the short term, the Legal Guardian is something that governments at any level could elect or designate. We could have a community-based Legal Guardian who would, among other things, make sure that the river that runs in my backyard is as clean or cleaner when I leave the community as when I came to it.

In fact, early next year, SEHN should have draft constitutional amendments for states, nations, and tribes, as well as a draft statute that would implement US Constitutional provisions and a job description of a Legal Guardian. We are collaborating with the Harvard Law School’s Human Rights Clinic to help put draft laws in place at these levels to help guide people on how they could make decisions for those who come after us.

There are 759 Indian tribes, and most have constitutions. Fifty states and Puerto Rico have constitutions. And then there’s the US Constitution. These governments all have processes to amend those documents, and we’ll share this idea with them all.

We are also cooperating with the law schools at University of Vermont and the University of Iowa to take these “future generations” laws further when it comes to climate change. And it’s in that context that we’re writing an actual job description for a Legal Guardian for Future Generations.

For so long, the environmental movement said “no.” What I’ve discovered with the Precautionary Principle is that we are saying “yes” to safer products, goals, progress that means health, wholeness, beauty. To not living ugly and poor and degraded lives.

And then with Guardianship, we say “yes” to the invitation to this larger vision of who we can be individually *and* what we can do together.

CAQ/Tracy: What can people do to be Guardians?

Carolyn: They can start out with the small and respectful gesture. Many small and respectful gestures add up. We can stand up with the nobility, the honor, the sacred obligation to live in this world in ways that grace our children and those to come with health and wholeness.

Whatever it is that you can start to do to reduce your impact on the world—whether it’s eliminating paper towels, changing light bulbs, driving less, walking more, adopting a river ... advocating for a Legal Guardian at your city council—do it. Ask yourself what your gift or skill in the world is and what the problem you hear calling to you is, and line those up. Know what you do well and use it to address the problems in the world that call to you.

As Mary Oliver asked, “What will you do with your one wild and precious life?” 

For up-to-date information on SEHN’s Guardianship Project, sign up for its free “Networker” e-newsletter at www.sehn.org. If you are interested in establishing guardianships for future generations in your town or county, e-mail info@sehn.org.

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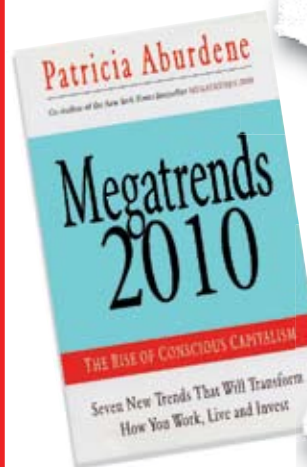
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Co-op America Updates

News and victories from Co-op America's programs—and how you can get more involved with us to create a green economy and a more just and sustainable future.

courtesy of Jessica Long



Jessica Long, Co-op America's Corporate Social Responsibility Fellow, rallies for climate solutions at the annual Auto Show in Detroit—demanding plug-in electric hybrids that get 100+ miles per gallon.

Climate Action: Adopt-a-Dealer

Current plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) are getting 100+ mpg, but instead of developing them, Ford and General Motors (GM) are headed in the wrong direction—promoting corn ethanol as an “environmentally friendly” fuel. Ethanol-fueled cars are less efficient overall, and using current technologies can produce even more global warming emissions than gasoline-fueled cars. Raising corn for ethanol wastes energy, water, and land, and using food crops for fuel hurts the world's poorest people. (Read side-by-side comparisons of biofuels and fuel alternatives in our *Fuels for the Future* edition of *Co-op America Quarterly*: www.coopamerica.org/go/fuelsrankings.)

Let Ford and GM know that you oppose ethanol and instead want vehicles that get 40 mpg by 2012, and 55 mpg by 2020, using plug-in hybrid technology. Start locally by taking action with your local Ford and GM dealers. Our Adopt-A-Dealer guide includes everything you need to encourage auto dealers near you to support fuel-efficient PHEVs. They, in turn, will let the auto companies know that customers are clamoring for climate-friendly cars. Download our Adopt-a-Dealer guide at www.coopamerica.org/go/plugin or call 800/58-GREEN to request a copy.

Spring Green Festivals: Seattle & Chicago

Mark your calendars: Our “party with a purpose” that has introduced tens

of thousands of people to the growing green economy in Washington, DC, and San Francisco comes to the Pacific Northwest this spring with the first Seattle Green Festival, April 12–13. Green Festival also returns to the Midwest May 17–18 at Chicago's Navy Pier. Join us for visionary speakers, green living demonstrations, and more than 200 green business exhibitors, along with delicious organic and vegetarian food! Green Festival is a joint program of Co-op America and Global Exchange: www.greenfestivals.org

Fair Trade: Spread the Word!

Co-op America's Fair Trade Program worked with Global Exchange, Equal Exchange, and many others last October to coordinate a Reverse Trick-or-Treating campaign. Children all over the US handed Fair Trade chocolates to homeowners while trick-or-treating, bringing awareness and national media attention to the child labor and human rights issues of the chocolate industry.

We are also continuing to distribute our updated, full-color *Guide to Fair Trade*, with over 26,000 given out already. Call 800/58-GREEN or visit www.fairtradeaction.org to order copies today—you only pay shipping.

ResponsibleShopper.org: All New!

More than a million people turn to Co-op America's Responsible Shopper site each year for valuable information about the social and environmental practices of major consumer corporations. These visitors, and many more, will find that the site has a new look as of Spring 2008. Wondering about who owns a particular brand, or how the major players in an industry stack up against each other? Take a moment to search www.responsibleshopper.org. You'll see some new features, including an industry page that ranks companies within an industry according to their social and environmental track records; a more user-friendly and visually appealing interface; and a way for visitors to let us know what campaigns they've participated in and how they've greened their life. And as always, check

out our research on abuses and scandals involving the world's largest companies; take action against corporate abuse; and learn strategies to shop and “unshop” to grow the green economy.

PAPER: Help Magazines Go WoodWise

The Magazine PAPER Project assists publications in making the switch to recycled paper and developing strong environmental stewardship policies. Our work to help *Scientific American* switch to recycled paper a few years ago and our presentation at the Council of Science Editors Annual Conference helped encourage two other scientific journals to make the switch this year: *Science* and *The Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Soon, find these magazine leaders and others in your local bookshop: We have teamed up with Barnes & Noble and Hastings stores nationwide to showcase magazines that use recycled paper. And Co-op America's Magazine PAPER program can help you demand change from magazine laggards who still print on virgin-pulp paper: visit our Web site, www.woodwise.org.

Social Investing: Make 2008 the Year You Start!

Co-op America's 2008 *Guide to Socially Responsible Investing* is a comprehensive financial planning handbook for anyone who wants to retire securely in a better world. Newly updated for 2008, our popular guide includes an introduction to shareholder advocacy and community investing, a directory of Social Investment Services, user-friendly worksheets, and expert advice on navigating the money maze. Available for \$6; call 800/58-GREEN.

Sign Up for Our Free Newsletter!

So much happens between each print issue of *Co-op America Quarterly*! Sign up for our free e-mail newsletter to get breaking green news, more green tips, and special green discounts. Last year our members scored major victories through our online campaigns. Take action online with us all year long for a just and sustainable economy—sign up today at www.coopamerica.org.

With your support, the Co-op America Green Business Network™, the largest association of socially and environmentally responsible businesses, is changing the way America does business. Our 3,000+ green business members are introducing innovative and effective ways to care for workers, communities, the environment, and consumers. Find more in Co-op America's *National Green Pages*™.


Co-op America Award Winners





Chip Py



Erin Ford from Organic Valley Family of Farms  accepts our Green Business Leadership Award from last year's winner, Jeff Mendelsohn of New Leaf Paper , and Co-op America Green Business Network™ director Denise Hamler.

Organic Valley Wins Our Green Business Leadership Award


Members of the Co-op America Green Business Network™ honored Organic Valley Family of Farms  with the 2007 Green Business Leadership Award in San Francisco in November. Organic Valley, based in LaFarge, WI, won the honor for its work to promote organic, small-scale farming.



Organic Valley was chosen as the winner from among five companies nominated by the 300 green business leaders attending the conference. The 2007 nominees for the award were: Social(k) , SteppingStones , gDiapers , and French Meadow Bakery .

Organic Valley is currently 1,300 farmers strong, having grown in its 18 years from a handful of farmers and \$1,000 to a \$410 million enterprise. Erin Ford, who leads the sustainability efforts at Organic Valley, accepted the award; she will also be speaking at Co-op America's Chicago Green Business Conference this April on Organic Valley's extensive sustainability programs, including their work on transportation, facility management, and farms.

Contact: Organic Valley Family of Farms, 888/444-6455, www.organicvalley.com.

Reusablebags.com Wins Our People's Choice Award


The people have spoken! Thousands of people went online last fall to vote for their favorite green business, and Co-op America has tallied the votes. Co-op America's People's Choice Award for Green Business of the Year went to Chicago-based ReusableBags.com , which was named the winner at the San Francisco Green Festival last November.

After an extensive online voting process, ReusableBags.com was the favorite among the top ten nominees, which included national green companies like Flexcar —a car-sharing company—and local businesses like New Jersey's Yoga Nine yoga studio/Buddha Body Fair Trade Store . People's Choice winner ReusableBags.com estimates that it has helped 70,000 customers to reduce their consumption of use-and-toss items (such as petroleum-based plastic shopping bags) by 190 millions units.

"Our ongoing mission since day one has been to change the status quo of society's use-and-toss mentality by providing sound, practical ideas and products," said Reusablebags.com founder Vincent Cobb upon receiving the award. "We were honored to be nominated the past two years for this Award. And it is a thrill to be the winner."


Contact: 888/707-3873, www.reusablebags.com. For more information on Co-op America's People's Choice Award, visit www.coopamerica.org/greenbusiness/peopleschoice.

Recycline Wins Forbes' "Boost Your Business" Contest

Co-op America Green Business Network™ member Recycline , manufacturer of toothbrushes, razors, and other products made from 100-percent recycled plastic, has been working to close the waste loop for over ten years. The company now has even more resources to help expand those efforts, since it won the grand prize in the "Boost Your Business" contest sponsored by Forbes and HP.


The contest, which launched in March of 2007, asked small-business owners to submit business plans demonstrating what they would do if they won the \$100,000 prize. Of the nearly 1,000 entrepreneurs who sent in business plans, 20 semi-finalists survived. Visitors to Forbes.com were then encouraged to review the business plans of the semi-finalists and vote for their top five. Through our e-mail newsletter, Co-op America encouraged our members to visit Forbes.com to help this Vermont-based green company, which has been a Green Business Network member since 1999, make it into the final round of the contest.

"Recycline's victory is very exciting because it demonstrates that the mainstream business world is recognizing the real potential of green businesses," said Co-op America's Green Business Network director Denise Hamler, "It shows the desire on behalf of the public to see innovative green businesses thrive."

"As we move beyond the natural channel to the mainstream marketplace, it builds our confidence and momentum greatly to have an organization that has the reach of Co-op America to step in behind us," says Eric Hudson, Recycline's founder and CEO. "It is great to see the impact we can have when we spread our mission together." 

Contact: 888/354-7296, www.recycline.com.

Correction

In the "Green Business News" section of our Fall 2007 issue, we referred to Food for Thought  as a restaurant and catering company. Food for Thought (888/935-2748, www.foodforthought.net) is neither—it is a manufacturer of organic and Fair Trade specialty foods and gifts.

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(out of 1623 large-cap blend funds)

The overall Morningstar ratings for the 3- and 5-year periods ended December 31, 2007 were 4 stars (out of 1623 large-cap blend funds) and 4 stars (out of 1278 large-cap blend funds) respectively.

Investors should consider a fund's investment objectives, risks, fees and expenses carefully before investing. This and other important information can be found in the Fund's prospectus, which you can obtain by calling 877.628.2583. Please read it carefully before making an investment. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. For performance data current to the most recent month-end, please visit www.nb.com/performance.

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Source: Morningstar 12/31/07. For each retail municipal fund with at least a three-year history, Morningstar calculates overall, 3-, 5-, and 10-year Morningstar Ratings based on a Morningstar Risk-Adjusted Return measure that accounts for variation in a fund's monthly performance (including the effects of sales charges, loads, and redemption fees), placing more emphasis on downward variations and rewarding consistent performance. The top 10% of funds in each category receives 5 stars, the next 22.5% receives 4 stars, the next 35% receives 3 stars, the next 22.5% receives 2 stars and the bottom 10% receives 1 star. Ratings are ©2008 Morningstar, Inc. All rights reserved. The information contained herein: (1) is proprietary to Morningstar and/or its content providers; (2) may not be copied or distributed; and (3) is not warranted to be accurate, complete or timely. Neither Morningstar nor its content providers are responsible for any damages or losses arising from any use of this information. ©2008 Neuberger Berman Management Inc., distributor. All rights reserved.



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MEMBER SERVICES. Co-op America is a membership organization helping people to vote with their dollars for a better world. Membership includes a subscription to *Co-op America Quarterly*, the *Real Money* newsletter, and the *National Green Pages*.™

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