

# Food and Beverages

Understanding everyday toxicants and how you can minimize your exposure



## Additional Resources

Learn more about the chemicals in your everyday products and environment:

**The Environmental Working Group:** [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)

**Explore our website:**  
[www.seed-program.org](http://www.seed-program.org)

**Contact & Follow us:**  
[SEED@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:SEED@hsph.harvard.edu)  
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[@drmesserlian](https://twitter.com/drmesserlian)



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## How can I minimize my exposure?

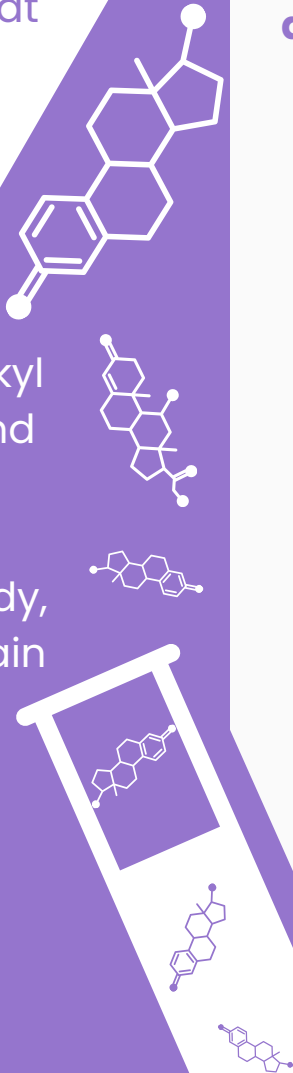


- Wash your hands thoroughly before cooking or eating and after handling electronics
- Rinse produce thoroughly, filter drinking water sources, and buy organic when possible
- Replace plastic utensils with wood or stainless steel cutlery and cookware
- Do not microwave food and beverages in plastic containers; use glass storage containers
- Use stainless steel or cast iron pans instead of non-stick pans
- Avoid processed foods, limit dairy products, and cook more meals at home
- Minimize ordering takeout, using takeout containers (e.g., coffee cups), and eating out
- Drink filtered water (charcoal filtering systems work well)

# EDCs

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

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



## These chemicals are harmful

**Current research suggests that EDCs, including PFAS, lead to adverse health effects. These chemicals can:**

- ✗ Impair neurodevelopment
- ✗ Alter immune function
- ✗ Increase cancers risk
- ✗ Alter metabolic function
- ✗ Increase the risk of reproductive disorders and adverse birth outcomes



Exposure to EDCs frequently occurs when we consume food and beverages that have been in contact with EDCs. When food and beverages are in plastic or canned storage containers that are heated up, such as in the microwave, EDCs leach into the contents. Seeking alternatives can minimize your exposure and benefit your health!

### Where are EDS hiding in your diet?



Food or beverages packaged or stored in plastic



Canned food and beverages (even if BPA-free)



Takeout containers and microwave meals



Processed, dairy products, and fast foods



Non-stick pans and plastic cookware



Straws, cutlery, and other single-use plastic products



Unfiltered water sources and processed drinks