



## 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.

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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



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**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](http://www.coopamerica.org/go/healyourhome).

