



# Healthy Home Reference Card



**AVOID** cleaning products with the words DANGER, WARNING, CAUTION or POISON on the label.

**AVOID** common\* paints, stains and finishes with smelly odors - they contain VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds).

**AVOID** plastic toys made with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and beware of painted toys which may contain lead.

**AVOID** furnishings and mattresses treated with synthetic flame retardant chemicals (called PBDEs<sup>1</sup>).

**AVOID** wall to wall carpeting, where dust and toxins can accumulate and remain trapped in the fibers.

**AVOID** synthetic carpets and furnishings that may contain formaldehyde and other toxins.

**AVOID** down or feather beds/pillows which may trigger allergies and asthma.

**CHOOSE** environmentally preferable, non-toxic cleaning products. Look for "phosphate-free" on the label.

**CHOOSE** paints, stains and finishes labeled as VOC-Free, Zero VOC or Low VOC. Ask your retailer.

**CHOOSE** safe, washable or unpainted wood toys. Investigate "filler" ingredients in all stuffed toys.

**CHOOSE** PBDE-free bedding such as organic cotton, natural rubber or wool blends. See alternatives online.

**CHOOSE** tile, solid wood or sustainable bamboo flooring which can be cleaned thoroughly.

**CHOOSE** naturally dyed, natural fiber area rugs such as cotton or wool, and furnishings made from natural materials.

**CHOOSE** to use hypo-allergenic or allergen barrier covers on all bedding.

**AVOID** using toxic pesticides to control insects indoors such as ants and roaches.

**AVOID** exposing children and pregnant women to lead contamination in the home. Avoid "do-it-yourself" lead paint removal.

**AVOID** the accumulation of dust that may contain harmful substances such as pesticides, lead paint and others.

**AVOID** the buildup of mold and mildew in your home which can trigger allergies.

**AVOID** disposable baby diapers that contain plastics which are not biodegradable.

**AVOID** household appliances that don't include cleanable or replaceable filters.

**AVOID** possible exposure to radon gas and asbestos in your home.

**AVOID** chemically-based "fresheners" that add to indoor air pollution.

**CHOOSE** to eliminate the source of infestation and use natural, non-toxic or less-toxic insect control methods.

**CHOOSE** professional lead testing if the house was built before 1978. Use only a certified lead abatement contractor for all lead paint removal.

**CHOOSE** to dust often. Damp mop floors and vacuum weekly using a HEPA filter. Use air purifiers to reduce allergens.

**CHOOSE** to find and fix moisture sources: check for leaky roofs, damp basements. Use dehumidifiers.

**CHOOSE** natural, non-toxic, chlorine-free, biodegradable diapers or compostable liners with reusable covers.

**CHOOSE** appliances offering replaceable or cleanable filters: vacuums, humidifiers, and air conditioners are most important.

**CHOOSE** to have your home tested for the presence of radon gas and asbestos.

**CHOOSE** to open windows whenever possible. Choose nature's "air freshener"!

\*Common/typical/standard: Refers to the most widely found form of product in the US today.

<sup>1</sup> PBDE: polybrominated diphenyl ethers.

Printed with soy inks on recycled paper.



# Healthy Environment Reference Card



**AVOID** lawn and garden products that contain the words: DANGER (most toxic), WARNING (toxic) or CAUTION (less toxic).

**AVOID** disposing of toxic items such as oil, gasoline, batteries, pesticides, asbestos, paint and solvents, with regular garbage.

**AVOID** unnecessary driving whenever possible to reduce air pollution.

**AVOID** adding to your "carbon footprint" with excess vehicle emissions.

**AVOID** assuming that gas and oil are the only viable options for heating, cooling and electricity.

**AVOID** wasting energy due to poor insulation and inefficient heating/cooling systems.

**AVOID** using gasoline-powered lawn equipment such as lawn mowers, leaf blowers and trimmers.

**CHOOSE** organic methods of lawn and garden care. Use organic fertilizers, compost and natural insect repellents.

**CHOOSE** to properly dispose of toxic items through your town's "S.T.O.P." or toxic waste management program.

**CHOOSE** to carpool to work, movies, concerts and other activities. Bike or take public transportation if available.

**CHOOSE** to "drive smart" by maintaining your vehicle. Check tire pressure and filters, and choose high MPG vehicles.

**CHOOSE** energy sources such as solar, wind, biofuels and geothermal power which produce minimal or no pollution.

**CHOOSE** better home insulation. Upgrade older heating/cooling systems to more energy efficient "Energy Star" models.

**CHOOSE** "people-powered" options such as manual push mowers, clippers or rakes. If necessary, use electric – not gasoline.

**AVOID** unnecessary electrical consumption.

**AVOID** using disposable plastic and paper bags when shopping in grocery stores, department stores and elsewhere.

**AVOID** purchasing products in large, wasteful, oversized packaging.

**AVOID** throwing recyclable materials into the garbage.

**AVOID** using non-native plantings and energy-intensive landscapes that require excessive watering and pesticide use.

**AVOID** paving driveways with blacktop and concrete which can cause flooding and polluted runoff that contaminates our water system.

**AVOID** unnecessary exposure to the electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation from products such as computers, alarm clocks and electric can openers.

**AVOID** an excessive lifestyle that overuses the earth's natural resources.

**CHOOSE** to conserve. Turn off the lights, TV, and computer. Unplug all chargers and small appliances when not in use.

**CHOOSE** to use recyclable, reusable shopping bags whenever possible. Opt to use natural cotton or canvas bags.

**CHOOSE** to buy concentrated liquids that require less packaging: juice, detergents.

**CHOOSE** to recycle all plastics, glass, paper and aluminum.

**CHOOSE** natural landscapes and hearty native plants that require less water and remain healthy without pesticides.

**CHOOSE** to use permeable materials, such as gravel, bricks or bluestone to pave driveways and walkways.

**CHOOSE** to keep electrical gadgets at a distance. Keep electric alarm clocks and radios away from the head of your bed.

**CHOOSE** to live "smaller". Adopt a "less is more" philosophy.





# Healthy Lifestyle Reference Card



**AVOID** plastic drinking water bottles that can leach harmful toxins and contribute to waste and pollution.

**AVOID** plastics labeled #3 (PVC) and #6 (Styrofoam) which contain phthalates, and #7 (Polycarbonate) which may contain the hormone disruptor Bisphenol A (BPA).

**AVOID** personal care products that contain parabens or phthalates, such as methylparaben and dibutyl phthalate (DBP).

**AVOID** exposure to toxic dry-cleaning chemicals such as perchloroethylene (also known as "perc") – a carcinogen.

**AVOID** tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke.

**AVOID** overuse of insect and mosquito repellents that contain DEET – a known nerve toxin. Don't apply directly to skin.

**AVOID** feminine care products that may contain pesticides, bleach and plastics.

**CHOOSE** reusable and recyclable glass or stainless steel containers. If necessary, use #2 plastic (high density polyethylene).

**CHOOSE** plastics only when necessary. Remember the rhyme: "Choose 5, 4, 1 or 2 – all the rest are bad for you!" Avoid re-using #1 plastic.

**CHOOSE** to read labels and use natural personal care products (including lotions, shampoos, cosmetics) that are fragrance-, paraben-, and phthalate-free.

**CHOOSE** dry cleaners who use CO<sub>2</sub> or water-based cleaners. Remove/recycle plastic bags from all dry-cleaned clothes and air them out before bringing inside.

**CHOOSE** a "smoke-free" lifestyle. Make your home and car "smoke-free."

**CHOOSE** a safe, effective insect repellent. Minimize DEET use. Choose picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus and use as needed.

**CHOOSE** to use natural or chemical-free feminine care products.

**AVOID** anti-microbial and anti-bacterial soaps, especially those containing triclosan – a pesticide.

**AVOID** excessive use of cell phones and the electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation they emit.

**AVOID** unnecessary medical x-rays, CT scans, fluoroscopy and other forms of radiation exposure.

**AVOID** skipping sleep. Don't disregard the importance of a good night's rest.

**AVOID** sleeping in rooms that are not completely dark. This disrupts normal sleep rhythms and affects health.

**AVOID** a sedentary, inactive lifestyle.

**AVOID** prolonged sun exposure and sunscreens containing oxybenzone and PABA (para-aminobenzoic acid) which absorb into skin and may cause cell damage.

**AVOID** dwelling on situations, decisions or people that cause you stress and anxiety.

**CHOOSE** bio-based, fragrance-free soaps. Wash hands often – before eating, after playing and after using the bathroom.

**CHOOSE** to use speakerphone or a headset with cell phones. Encourage children to limit cell phone use.

**CHOOSE** to keep good x-ray and medical test records. Share them with all health-care providers to avoid unnecessary tests.

**CHOOSE** to get 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Kids need more. Toddlers: 12-15 hrs; 3-5 yr olds: 11-13 hrs; 5-12 yr olds: 9-11 hrs.

**CHOOSE** to sleep in complete darkness. Turn off the TV and all artificial lights. Use light-blocking shades or a sleep mask.

**CHOOSE** a form of daily physical exercise, such as walking, jogging or cycling.

**CHOOSE** sunscreens with lower risk ingredients such as: titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Wear protective clothing and hats. Use umbrellas or canopies for shade.

**CHOOSE** to take a positive approach. Balance your life with enjoyable activities.



# Healthy Eating Reference Card



**AVOID** excessive consumption of pesticide treated produce – these have five digit PLU label codes that begin with #4.

**AVOID** the 12 most pesticide-contaminated fruits and vegetables whenever possible – the “dirty dozen”: peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, imported grapes, spinach, lettuce and potatoes.

**AVOID** plastic baby bottles and canned liquid baby formula - both could leach the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA).

**AVOID** cooking all your vegetables and fruits.

**AVOID** excessive BBQing of meats, fish and poultry at high temperatures. Don't eat charred meats which can contain PAHs<sup>1</sup> – known carcinogens.

**AVOID** diets high in red meat and high fat dairy products. Avoid highly processed foods and white – sugar, flour, bread and rice.

**CHOOSE** to eat organic produce when possible – these have five digit PLU label codes that begin with #9 (pesticide-free).

**CHOOSE** the 12 least-contaminated fruits and vegetables (non-organic): onions, blueberries, papaya, broccoli, cabbage, bananas, kiwi, frozen sweet peas, asparagus, mango, pineapples and sweet corn.

**CHOOSE** to breastfeed – mom's milk is best! Use glass baby bottles and choose powdered baby formula when necessary.

**CHOOSE** to eat “live” (raw) foods such as: salads, sprouts, avocados, and coconuts.

**CHOOSE** to BBQ less often and limit meat portions. Eat more vegetables. Cook at lower temperatures to avoid charring.

**CHOOSE** to maintain a healthy weight. Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and legumes such as beans.

**AVOID** microwaving whenever possible. Never microwave food in plastic containers or with plastic wrap.

**AVOID** eating non-organic eggs, meat milk, cheese and other dairy products.

**AVOID** certain fish – especially when pregnant – which are high in mercury or PCBs<sup>2</sup>. Usually larger fish – tuna, shark, swordfish, and farm-raised salmon.

**AVOID** processed baby foods made with pesticide-treated ingredients.

**AVOID** trans-fats and diets high in saturated fats. Avoid hydrogenated oils – commonly found in baked goods.

**AVOID** drinks made with high fructose corn syrup and high refined sugar content – soda, iced tea, and juice.

**AVOID** excessive consumption of alcohol. Remember: 1 drink = 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. liquor.

**AVOID** exposure to chemicals that may leach from plastic containers and non-stick cookware.

**CHOOSE** to cook in the oven or on top of the stove. Use glass or stainless steel cookware.

**CHOOSE** to purchase hormone-free, organic eggs, meat and dairy products.

**CHOOSE** healthier fish such as wild Pacific salmon, sardines, anchovies and herring. Or, get healthy Omega 3 fatty acids from flax, hemp and other oils.

**CHOOSE** organic baby food or make your own from certified organic foods.

**CHOOSE** healthier, less processed oils from plant sources such as olive, walnut, coconut or flax.

**CHOOSE** to drink water. Keep a glass or stainless steel container of filtered water at work and at home.

**CHOOSE** non-alcoholic drink options. Try flavored seltzers or sparkling water with a splash of your favorite juice.

**CHOOSE** to use glass, stainless steel or porcelain containers for food storage and cooking.

<sup>1</sup>PAHs = Polyaromatic hydrocarbons

<sup>2</sup>PCB = Polychlorinated biphenyls





# Healthy Community Reference Card



## It's Time To Take Action. YOU Can Make A World of Difference!

Make your community healthier now and for future generations.  
Join with neighbors, friends, school boards and elected officials to make small changes with big impacts.

### ► TO BUILD HEALTHIER SCHOOLS – Support:

- **HEALTHY FOODS** – in the cafeteria and vending machines
- **SAFE SPORTS FIELDS AND PLAYGROUNDS** – no pesticides, artificial turf, pressure-treated wood, or recycled shredded rubber.
- **SAFER CLEANING** – use safer, less toxic cleaning products.
- **REDUCED BUS POLLUTION** – limit school bus idling times. Replace old diesel school buses with hybrid, natural gas, biodiesel, or electric buses.
- **SMART SCHEDULING** – do all roof repairs/construction when school is not in session
- **SAFE SCIENCE LABS** – get professional inspection/removal of outdated lab chemicals.
- **SAFE PEST CONTROL** – use the least toxic methods of insect and rodent control.
- **MOLD CLEANUP** – monitor and fix leaks and moisture problems so mold won't grow.
- **SAFE DRINKING WATER** – no lead solder in water fountains; limit plastic bottle usage.
- **SAFE ART SUPPLIES** – use non-toxic rubber cement, spray adhesives, paint and markers.
- **SMOKE-FREE AREAS** – establish “no-smoking” zones around buildings and playing fields.

### ► TO BUILD A MORE WALKABLE COMMUNITY – Support:

- |   |                                    |                               |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • <b>BIKE PATHS</b>   | • <b>WALKING PATHS/CLUBS</b>       | • <b>CONTINUOUS SIDEWALKS</b> |
| • <b>PLAYING FIELDS</b>   | • <b>SHADE TREES</b>               | • <b>PUBLIC BENCHES</b>       |
| • <b>NO-VEHICLE ZONES</b>   | • <b>PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC LIGHTS</b> |                               |
| • <b>TRAFFIC CALMING TOOLS:</b> narrow lanes, roundabouts, medians, and speed bumps |                                    |                               |

Printed with soy inks on recycled paper.

### ► TO ELIMINATE POLLUTION AND ENERGY WASTE – Support:

- **BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** – increase carpool locations, train and bus service.
- **INCREASING YOUR OWN USE** of public transportation and carpools for work and play.
- **POWERING DOWN** – reduce use of air conditioning, cosmetic and nighttime lighting.
- **EATING LOCALLY GROWN FOODS** – to minimize transportation energy waste.
- **RENEWABLE POWER INITIATIVES** such as wind and solar power.
- **PEOPLE POWER** not gas power for recreation, gardening and yard maintenance.
- **SAFE VENTING** – wood burning stoves are hazardous without proper ventilation.
- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY POLICIES** for homes, businesses and municipal buildings.
- **CLEANUP OF HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES** – research their locations and ensure clean-up.

### ► WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT – Support:

- **GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS** such as LEED or AIA for all new community projects.
- **ENERGY STAR STANDARDS** – for new home/office/business construction.
- **OPEN SPACES** – encourage public purchase of open spaces in your community.
- **GREEN PURCHASING** – promote purchasing of safe, environmentally responsible products, cleaning supplies and construction materials, for all municipal buildings.
- **INCREASED RECYCLING** in public community spaces and commercial districts.
- **PESTICIDE-FREE PUBLIC PROPERTIES** – parks, playgrounds and municipal buildings.
- **CLEAN VEHICLES** – use hybrids, natural gas or biodiesel for vehicles/equipment.
- **SMOKE-FREE AREAS** – create “no-smoking” zones near businesses and public buildings.
- **COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE** – establish farmers markets for local growers.
- **BUILT COMMUNITY PLANNING** – minimize vehicle dependence through mixed-use zoning. Locate businesses and recreational areas within walking distance of homes.
- **NO CELL PHONE TOWERS** near schools, homes and community recreational areas.

Copyright © 2009 Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, Inc. (HBCAC). Illustrations © 2009 Craig Boldman. All rights reserved. Scientific content reviewed by Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Initial funding provided by New York State to benefit the NYS Children's Environmental Health Centers. For more information, visit [www.ribbet.org](http://www.ribbet.org).