



Prescriptions for PREVENTION

Guidance from the Western States
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit



Food



Did you know?

Proper nutrition, before and during pregnancy, as well as in your child's early years, is vital. You can reduce the amount of harmful chemicals children are exposed to through food by choosing foods that are less likely to contain contaminants and by maintaining a balanced diet of lean protein, grains, low-fat dairy, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.



Do

- Feed your child a **balanced diet** that contains a variety of whole, non-processed foods (offer a rainbow of colors of fruits and vegetables)
- Buy **organic** when possible, especially for foods that are known to have higher levels of pesticides.
 - See the [Environmental Working Group](#) "Dirty Dozen" shopping guide.
- To reduce exposures to pesticides and other contaminants, **rinse all produce thoroughly** with water prior to eating.
- **Fish is good for you** and your children. Choose fish that are lower in mercury and other contaminants.
 - See the FDA's ["Advice about Eating Fish"](#) guide



Don't

- Avoid **pre-packaged and ultra processed foods**. They often have higher more toxic chemicals like microplastics and are less nutritious.
- **Limit** foods containing high amounts of **artificial food colorings**, they have been linked to health problems.
- Read [nutrition labels](#) Key things to avoid include: added sugars, high sodium, high saturated fat, and long ingredient lists with unrecognizable chemical names.
- Avoid high levels of **PFAS**, look for labels that say "PFAS-free", avoid Teflon coated cookware, and test your well water for PFAs.
- Don't heat or microwave foods in plastics! Avoid using plasticware items like spatulas, utensils, containers and cutting boards.
- **Limit rice-based products**, these can be high in arsenic.
 - Avoid products made with brown rice syrup.



For more information, scan the code or visit

<https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/curriculum-tools/prescriptions-for-prevention/>

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