



I want to talk about Breast Cancer. I believe we have more breast cancer today than a century ago because of what we eat and what we breathe. While there's not conclusive evidence providing proof that certain chemicals cause breast cancer, there's certainly evidence prompting cause for concern. To protect yourself and your family, try simple household swaps and avoid these 10 breast-cancer-causing *suspects* from Prevention Magazine.

Mothballs

A safer solution: Many department stores in the United Kingdom have turned to sandalwood and lavender to keep bugs away, instead of using toxic mothball or flake chemicals. Filling a cotton tea bag (available at many health food stores) or an old handkerchief with cloves, tansy, or sweet woodruff could serve as another mothball alternative and keep clothing moths away.

Toilet Deodorizers

A safer solution: To disinfect your toilet, dump in half a bottle of distilled white vinegar, let it sit overnight, then in the morning, scrub the commode with a toilet brush and flush. *My solution* is to use shake of baking soda and a drop of dish soap each time you scrub your toilet. Then you are avoiding even more harsh chemicals. See my article on Green Clean on page 14 in

Cooking with Judy.

Air Fresheners

A safer solution: Clean up the source of the bad odor and use beeswax candles (NO scents) for ambience. You can also put vodka (who knew) in a spray bottle and use as an air freshener. It contains ethyl alcohol, a common component of many commercial air fresheners, but without the toxic petroleum additives and synthetic fragrances.

Vinyl

A safer solution: Use hemp or cotton shower curtains instead of vinyl; opt for

sustainable, natural flooring like Forest Stewardship Council hardwood, bamboo, or cork instead of vinyl; and avoid fake leather furnishings and accessories. Scented personal care products also often contain phthalates. See my alerts on vinyl pages **36 Volume 2** and page **50 Volume 4**.

Tainted Mascara

First let's talk about the **danger** -- many women don't know about. Cadmium, a carcinogenic heavy metal often found in cheap jewelry and some contaminated makeup products, helps fuel breast cancer. Breast cancer cells exposed to cadmium expressed increased levels of a protein that helps cancer spread more easily throughout the body, according to research presented at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology.

A safer solution: Use fewer makeup products to reduce your exposure. When applying blush or powders, use a sponge instead of a brush to reduce the amount you breathe in.

Air Pollution -- yes even the air we breathe -- this is just one reason we must take better care of our planet. The *danger*: In a study published in Environmental Health Perspectives, Canadian researchers found that women exposed to the highest levels of air pollution were nearly twice as likely to develop breast cancer as women living in the least polluted areas.

A safer solution: Telecommute whenever possible to cut back on air pollution. The American Lung Association also suggests avoiding burning fires in a home fireplace or wood stove because they create dangerous particulate pollution. Burning leaves also creates air pollution, so compost or mulch them instead of setting fall leaves ablaze.

Pesticides

A safer solution: Eat organic whenever possible. The gold standard is organic food grown locally, which also keeps pesticides out of your community's air and water supplies.

Canned Food

The danger: Bisphenol A, or BPA, is used in the can liner of most canned drinks and foods in the United States. A known hormone disruptor, BPA is linked to a higher risk of breast cancer. A 2012 study found monkeys exposed to BPA while pregnant were most likely to give birth to little girls with dense breasts, a known risk factor for breast cancer later in life.

A safer solution: Choose fresh or frozen food whenever possible and avoid No. 7 plastics, which could harbor BPA. Say no to trivial cash receipts, as well, since most thermal receipts are coated in BPA. (Be wary of BPA-free claims for packaging—researchers say the replacements could be just as dangerous as BPA, or worse.) For more information see my article on **BPA** on page **50** in **Volume 4**.

Certain Driveway Sealants

Did you know? Polycyclic aromatic

hydrocarbons (PAHs) are a group of chemicals that occur naturally in coal, crude oil, and gasoline. Used in some private driveway sealants that contain coal tar, PAHs have been shown to increase the risk of breast cancer.

A safer solution: Since PAHs can easily be tracked into the house, take your shoes off at the door. If you seal your driveway, use coal-tar-free versions or, better yet, use permeable paving solutions like gravel.

Mold & Mildew Cleaners

The danger: In a study published in Environmental Health, Silent Spring Institute researchers found women who used air fresheners and cleaned using mold-and-mildew-attacking cleaners (particularly bleach-based ones) were more likely to develop breast cancer compared to women who do NOT use these questionable household products.

A safer solution: Try this basic bathroom cleaner: Dissolve baking soda in water for spraying or sponging (1/8 cup per quart of water), sprinkle it dry on a damp sponge, or, for tough areas, make it into a paste with a little water. Baking soda has been found to kill certain types of mildew, and for the types it can't kill, its mild abrasiveness allows you to scrub the stuff away. It's safe for most surfaces, but you might want to test a small area first if you have any doubts. Apply the baking soda, either in spray or paste form, leave it alone for an hour or so, and then scrub with a soft brush or old toothbrush. Wipe and rinse well when finished. Again for more healthy cleaning tips see my article on **Green Clean** on page 14 in **Cooking with Judy**.