



greenPARENTING

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

AT KAISER PERMANENTE,

we recognize that healthy communities and a healthy environment are critical to the health and wellness of every person. We are dedicated to environmental sustainability because it has a direct effect on health. And we believe that every individual should enjoy the healthiest environment possible from the start.

For many expectant parents, the imminent arrival of a baby puts a greater focus on creating environmentally friendly surroundings for the newborn.



Here's what new parents need to know:

- From birth, children breathe more air, drink more water and eat more food per pound of body weight than adults. They're taking in more of everything, so there's a higher level of exposure.
- A young child's higher surface area to body mass ratio increases exposure to toxicants absorbed through the skin.
- Babies and children's systems aren't yet fully developed to detoxify industrial chemicals. For example, while an adult will absorb 10% of ingested lead, a toddler absorbs 50%.
- Many toxicants have long latency periods before adverse effects are evident, making early life exposure of particular concern. This is especially true with carcinogens like arsenic and asbestos and substances like radon. It's also true for some neurotoxicants, where early exposure may lead to behavior and developmental problems not noticed until problems arise in school or later in life. And early exposure to carcinogens may increase the risk of adulthood cancer and may cause certain cancers to appear sooner in life.

Here are tips for parents striving to green their nursery and household:

- First, have reasonable expectations. Expecting a baby is exciting but can also induce some anxiety; don't adopt more stress or guilt by trying to be perfect in terms of going green

Furnishing, Decorating and Cleaning:

- Choose lead-free and low VOC paint and PVC-free flooring and carpet whenever possible
- Avoid numerous chemicals by using safe, inexpensive homemade household cleaners. Find easy cleaning instructions here: www.ceh.org/householdcleaners
- Babies mean more laundry. Avoid synthetic fragrance, dyes or chlorine bleach. Use plant-based products.
- Avoid pesticides
- Take your shoes off at the door. Shoes can track pesticides and toxic chemicals inside your home. If you choose to keep shoes on, wipe them first on a good doormat.



Baby Care and Feeding:

- Use non-toxic, environmentally friendly baby care products.
- Instead of baby powder or talcum powder, use corn starch.
- Exchange your mercury thermometer for a digital one (and don't throw the mercury into the trash - dispose of it at your community's hazardous waste collection event)
- Many baby body care products aren't necessary. If you want to use them, select those without synthetic fragrance, preservatives or triclosan.



- Baby bottles and sippy cups made of polycarbonate plastic are likely to contain bisphenol-A. Go instead for glass bottles or containers made of polypropylene (recycling symbol # 5) or polyethylene (recycling symbol #1 or #2).
- Never heat milk or formula in plastic bottles. They can leach chemicals when exposed to heat. Use pots and pans without non-stick coating.
- Choose pesticide-free or organically produced products. Buying locally grown food reduces carbon emissions. Try making your own organic, locally grown baby food using a blender.
- Avoid bibs, teethingers and toys made from vinyl (PVC). Look for items marked as PVC-free, or opt for cloth or wooden items.
- If products have an odor, it may be the result of synthetic chemicals. Leave products outside to air them out before use.
- Avoid products with fragrance.
- Consider green diaper options. For example, newer hybrid diapers are flushable and come with a biodegradable insert and a washable covering.
- If a friend or family member is having the baby, look for green baby shower gifts. Some options include:
 - Organic baby clothes, receiving blankets and bedding. Opt for cotton, bamboo and vegetable dyes.
 - Or go totally green - have everyone give only "gently used" gifts, clothes, gear and toys.

www.kp.org/green