

Plastics and Pregnancy: A focus on phthalates

WHAT ARE PHTHALATES?

Phthalates (pronounced THAL-eights) are chemicals that are in plastics and many fragranced & colored personal and cleaning products.

WHERE ARE PHTHALATES FOUND?

They are found in many every day products such as:

- Plastic food & drink containers and packaging
- Products with fragrances like fragranced soap, lotion, makeup, body wash, hair care, perfumes
- Nail polish
- Fragranced cleaning products and air fresheners
- Fast food & processed food

What possible health risks may be linked with phthalate exposure?

In pregnant individuals exposed to phthalates, some studies* suggest a higher chance of:



**pre-term
birth**



**gestational
diabetes**



**decreased
fertility**



**longer time to
conception**

In children exposed during pregnancy, some studies* suggest a higher chance of:



**attention-
deficit/hyperactivity
disorder (ADHD)**



**language
development
delays**



**delays in
motor skill
development**

**Research is still being done to understand all of the health effects of phthalate exposure, and studies have shown that nearly all Americans have phthalates in their body. It is still important to try to stay away from chemicals like phthalates, especially during pregnancy or when trying to become pregnant.*

HOW ARE BABIES EXPOSED TO PHTHALATES?

- exposure to the baby from the pregnant person through the placenta during pregnancy
- breast milk from individuals exposed to phthalates



WHAT STEPS CAN YOU TAKE TO REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO PHTHALATES?

- Use wax paper or paper towels instead of plastic wrap
- Choose fresh and unprocessed food instead of fast food or pre-packaged food if/when possible
- Choose fragrance-free products, makeup, and cleaning supplies
- Choose nail polish labeled "three-free" or "3-free"
- Read labels & try to avoid products that list :
 - phthalate, fragrance, perfume, DEP, DBP, DEHP the plastic labels 3, 6, and 7
- Use containers and water bottles made of glass, stainless steel, ceramic, & porcelain instead of plastic
- Avoid microwaving plastic containers or products
- Avoiding cleaning plastic containers or products in the dishwasher

Resources for more information



Learn more about phthalates from Toxic Free Future



Use the Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Database at <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>

Scan the QR codes to learn more about phthalates and your personal care products

Ask your doctor about if you have questions about specific products