

# Healthy Homes, Healthy Congregations

*Minimizing Toxic Chemicals at home and at church*

## Easy Steps to Take

### Watch for Lead

- Test window frames and windowsills for lead in houses built before 1978. Simple lead test kits are available at your local hardware store
- Children under 6 and pregnant women should be checked for lead poisoning at your local health care provider

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/>

### Fish and Mercury

- Women of childbearing age and children should follow guidelines for eating fish with mercury:

[www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish)

### Skip the Pesticides

- Whenever possible, purchase organic fruit, vegetables, dairy and meat, raised without pesticides or herbicides.
- Eliminate indoor pests by improving your food storage habits, caulking entrance holes, installing door sweeps and repairing screens

[www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org)

## Healthy Homes, Healthy Congregations

is a program of the Minnesota Council of Churches. Contact us for more information on:

- Presentations on toxic chemicals and how to minimize their effects in your home and place of worship
- Existing faith-based and secular resources to increase your understanding of this issue
- Referrals to a specific denomination's worship, Bible study and educational resources
- Referrals to organizations who are involved in advocacy for environmental issues
- Training and individual consultation to those who want to develop environmental health programs in their congregations.

Please contact:  
**Lynne Holman**  
Program Organizer  
Minnesota Council of Churches  
122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 100  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
[lynne.holman@mnchurches.org](mailto:lynne.holman@mnchurches.org)

### Caring for Babies

- Avoid toys, bottles, teething rings or sippy cups with #3, 6 or 7 plastics
- Use glass bottles
- Avoid powders and talcs
- Choose cloth or wooden toys

[www.healthytoys.org](http://www.healthytoys.org)  
[www.healthychild.org](http://www.healthychild.org)

### Clean Up Your Cleaning

- Use cleaners labeled “plant-based”, “biodegradable”, “nontoxic” or “organic”. Companies such as Seventh Generation, Shaklee or Simple Green offer these and they are becoming increasingly available in supermarkets. Or make your own cleaning products using vinegar, baking soda, lemon and washing soda (Borax™)
- Choose spray bottles over aerosol cans
- Choose unbleached paper products

[www.healthylegacy.org](http://www.healthylegacy.org)

### Personal Care Products

- Reduce the number of products you use—this will limit the number of chemicals to which you are exposed
- Shop wisely! The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics offers a large database which rates personal care products according to safety
- Choose products that do not list “fragrance” in the ingredients

[www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org)

### Plastic Safety

- Check the number of the bottom of your plastic containers. #1, 2,4 and 5 are the least toxic for storing and serving food
- Don't microwave food in plastic containers—plastics under duress from heat release toxins into your food—choose ceramic or glass instead
- Throw out plastic containers that show wear and tear—they are leaching chemicals

[www.healthobservatory.org](http://www.healthobservatory.org)  
(Smart Plastics Guide)

