

The Buzz



Choosing Safer Personal Care Products

From shampoo and deodorant to makeup, lotions, hair products, and nail polish, personal care products are part of our everyday routines. While these products are generally considered safe when used as directed, some contain chemicals that researchers are studying for possible effects on human health. Taking a few simple steps can help reduce unnecessary exposure without giving up the products you enjoy.

Why Ingredients Matter

Some personal care products contain chemicals such as **phthalates, parabens, PFAS, triclosan, and certain metals**. Several of these chemicals are considered potential **endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)**. EDCs can interfere with the body's hormones, which help regulate important processes such as growth, development, reproduction, and metabolism.

The amount and frequency of exposure matter, and researchers are continuing to study the long-term health effects of many of these chemicals. NIEHS notes that it is not possible to completely avoid endocrine-disrupting chemicals, but informed choices can help reduce exposure.

Become a Savvy Label Reader

You don't need to replace every-

thing in your bathroom cabinet at once. Instead, consider these simple strategies:

- **Choose fragrance-free products when possible.** The term "fragrance" can represent a mixture of many chemicals that aren't individually listed on the label.
- **Look for simpler ingredient lists.** Fewer ingredients can make it easier to understand what you are putting on your skin.
- **Consider products without phthalates or PFAS** when practical, particularly for products you use frequently.
- **Use products as directed.** Follow warning labels and instructions, especially for hair dyes, chemical treatments, and aerosol products.
- **Don't assume "natural" always means safer.** Natural ingredients can still cause allergic reactions or irritation.

Stop using a product if it causes irritation and seek medical advice if symptoms persist.

Good Personal Care Habits

Safe use is just as important as choosing ingredients. Avoid sharing cosmetics, wash makeup off before going to bed, and replace old cosmetics. Be especial-

ly careful when using products around the eyes. **Hair dyes should never be used on eyebrows or eyelashes because of the risk of serious eye injury.**

Remember, you don't have to eliminate every chemical from your life. **Small changes can reduce exposure over time.** Start by looking at the products you use most often and consider switching to simpler, fragrance-free options when they are available.

Wellness Tip: The next time you run out of a personal care product, take a moment to read the label before buying a replacement. A little label awareness can be an easy step toward a healthier home.



Sources: National Institutes of Health, *Probing Personal Care Products*; University of Rochester Medical Center, *How Safe Are Cosmetics and Personal Care Products?*; National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, *Endocrine Disruptors*.

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Harvest Festival & Scarecrow Contest: Head to the Tolland Green October 3 from 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM for family-friendly fall activities, featuring patriotic-themed scarecrow displays honoring the nation's 250th anniversary

Cider Mill Road Race: Visit Crandall Park October 3rd, starting at 9:00 AM for Kids Fun Runs, a 1-mile cross-country Cider Mile on wooded trails, and the main 5K race at 10:30 AM.

Wicked Strange New England with Jeff Belanger, November 3 7-8:30PM at The Arts Center of Tolland, 22 Tolland Green. Jeff offers a tour of haunts, monsters, aliens, and weird history from our region. Drawing from a library of hundreds of legends, this program is different every time it's given. The bizarre is closer than you think!

The Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD), through funding from the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funds, is addressing uncontrolled high blood pressure, a risk factor for strokes and heart attacks. Hypertension (high blood pressure) can be controlled through lifestyle choices & some people will need medications prescribed by their doctor. EHHD is offering educational series throughout the district with a free at-home blood pressure monitor as part of the series. For more information go to the [Hot Topics page](#)

September is National Preparedness Month



Brown Rice Pilaf with Sage, Walnuts and Dried Fruit

Ingredients:

- canola cooking spray (as needed)
 - 1 onion (medium, chopped)
 - 1 celery stalks (small, ends trimmed and chopped)
 - 2 cups rice (brown, uncooked)
 - 2 1/2 cups water
 - 2 cups vegetable broth (fat-free, reduced sodium)
 - 1/4 cup raisins and 1/4 cup apricots (dried, chopped)
 - 1/4 cup, chopped walnuts
 - 1 teaspoon sage (dried)
 - 2 teaspoons sage (fresh, chopped)
 - salt and pepper to taste
1. Spray a large skillet with canola cooking spray. Heat skillet over medium heat.
 2. Sauté onion and celery until tender, about 5 minutes. Add brown rice and sauté for 5 minutes.
 3. Add water, broth, raisins, and apricots; heat to boiling. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 50 minutes.
 4. Stir in walnuts if desired, sage, salt and pepper.
- Transfer to serving dish. Garnish with fresh sage and serve immediately.

Be Careful About Ticks

Don't let cooler weather fool you! **Ticks can remain active throughout the fall**, especially on warmer days. In Connecticut, ticks are an important concern because they can transmit diseases such as Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis.

When spending time outdoors, especially in wooded or brushy areas:

- **Use tick repellent** containing DEET, picaridin, or another EPA-registered ingredient.



- **Wear long pants and long sleeves** when practical. Tucking pants into socks can provide extra protection
- **Stay on cleared trails** and avoid brushing against tall grass and dense vegetation.
- **Check yourself, children, and pets for ticks** after being outdoors. Pay particular attention to the scalp, behind the ears, under the arms, around the waist, and behind the knees.
- **Shower soon after coming indoors** to help remove unattached ticks.
- **Put clothing in the dryer on high heat** if appropriate for the fabric; heat can kill ticks that may be hiding in clothing.

If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove it promptly with fine-tipped tweezers by grasping it close to the skin and pulling upward with steady, even pressure. **The sooner an attached tick is removed, the better.** You can bring ticks to the Eastern Highlands Health District to be tested. For more information go to: **EHHD.org**

Fall is a beautiful time to enjoy Connecticut's outdoors. Just remember that tick prevention year-round.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from CTDPH. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

