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## **HFF Creating a Safe and Nurturing Environment for Your Child**

*-Carla Atherton, Director of the Healthy Family Formula*

The word “environment” has been aptly defined as anything that is not our “self.” This definition covers a vast array of things that we readily encounter, the most important being those that we need for survival such as food, water, air, and shelter. The condition of our environment directly impacts us in every way, so it is safe to say that if our environment is unhealthy, chances are, we will be, as well.

As parents, it is very difficult to protect ourselves and children from everything in our vast and ever-changing world. We can feel at the mercy of the decisions that other people make that damage or alter our environments. We can chose not to drive a car and reduce exhaust emissions, but there are still millions of other people driving their cars. We can chose not to spray our gardens, but the neighbors may spray theirs. We may chose not to engage in gossip, but we still hear it on the television and see it splashed all over every magazine in the supermarket. Unless we live in a secluded and pristine cabin in the woods, we will be affected in one way or another by an environment that we cannot fully control.

Many parents find this to be a dilemma. It can seem frustrating and futile to make adjustments to our lives that seem to be complicated and often overwhelming already; however, it is exactly in the choices we can make on a daily basis that can significantly reduce the risk of our environments being unhealthy. Once the risk is reduced, the total load on our bodies is also reduced, and, in turn, the risk of disease and illness is reduced, as well. In other words, there is a lot that we can do to create a safe and nurturing environment for our children if we are aware of the dangers and know how to reduce them.

Our homes, offices, schools, and cities are places that should be conducive to our well-being; but often the places where we live day in and day out, carry out our tasks, and engage with our friends and families contain toxins that harm our health.





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Toxins are any kind of substance that is harmful to the body. The presence of toxins can cause any imaginable form of illness, and to avoid the damage they can cause, the body is burdened with the task of cleaning them up and expelling them. Ingredients such as aluminum has been linked to Alzheimer's Disease (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21157018>), and phthalates (plasticizers) found in body sprays act as endocrine disruptors - in other words, they interfere with hormone levels and hormonal balance.

The Environmental Working Group has been reporting on the dangers of synthetic chemicals in body products and plastics for over a decade now, and in an article published on their website in 2006 they state that:

An analysis of the chemical contents of products reveals that the innocuous-looking 'fragrance' often contains chemicals linked to negative health effects. Phthalates, used to make fragrances last longer, are associated [with] damage to the male reproductive system, and artificial musks accumulate in our bodies and can be found in breast milk. Some artificial musks are even linked to cancer.

And if you've got asthma, watch out -- fragrance formulas are considered to be among the top 5 known allergens, and can trigger asthma attacks. (<http://www.ewg.org/enviroblog/2007/12/ask-ewg-what-fragrance>)

You can be exposed to toxins in many ways through the things you take in or are exposed to every day, as chemicals are everywhere. They are in our food, our water, and in our air. We ingest and inhale chemicals not only while out in our cities, but also while at work, school, and home. In this day and age where factories, commercial farms, and motorized vehicles abound, it is impossible to have a body that is untouched by toxins.

A study commissioned by the Environmental Working Group and reprinted in various publications including Scientific American showed that there were over 200 chemicals in the umbilical cords of the newborn babies in their study! Over 200!



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We know the developing fetus is one of the most vulnerable populations, if not the most vulnerable, to environmental exposure," said Anila Jacobs, EWG senior scientist. "Their organ systems aren't mature and their detox methods are not in place, so cord blood gives us a good picture of exposure during this most vulnerable time of life. (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/newborn-babies-chemicals-exposure-bpa/>)

We are only now starting to see the effect that those chemicals are having on the health of our children and general population.

Of particular concern to Jacobs: 21 newly detected contaminants, including the controversial plastics additive bisphenol A, or BPA, which mimics estrogen and has been shown to cause developmental problems and precancerous growth in animals. Last month, researchers reported that male Chinese factory workers exposed to high levels of the chemical experienced erectile dysfunction and other sexual problems. (<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/newborn-babies-chemicals-exposure-bpa/>)

The assault chemicals have on your body and the bodies of your children is cumulative; the exposures assault the body until it just doesn't have the capacity to clear them, which then build up and begin to create sickness and fatigue, first stressing the body, then creating a myriad of symptoms and diagnosable health conditions.

Toxins are a contributing factor for cancer (see the NIH's National Cancer Institute's article here: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/substances>). Toxins are a contributing factor for autism (see the article in Scientific American which discusses the findings of the M.I.N.D. Institute's recent study here:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/autism-rise-driven-by-environment/>). Toxins are a contributing factor for ADHD, asthma, autoimmunity, heart problems, digestive dysfunction, mental illness and mood disorders, learning disabilities, skin conditions, organ damage, hormone disruption, fatigue, weight gain or loss, the list goes on and on and on (see the state of Washington's Department of Ecology's list of chemicals and their health effects here: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget\\_sound/toxicchemicals/effects.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/puget_sound/toxicchemicals/effects.html)).





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Therefore, you want your family to be exposed to as few toxins as possible, and when you do encounter them, you want your family in the best shape possible to do the job of elimination and repair.

The body has several modes of detoxification to rid itself of unwanted, harmful toxins: the liver, skin, lungs, bowel, and kidneys. When there is an excess of exposures to toxins, those organs of detoxification can't keep up. You might be thinking, "not me, I don't work in a chemical plant or live downwind from a commercial farm that regularly does aerial spraying," but there are many many sources of toxins and chemicals that you and your family are exposed to on a daily basis that you may not even perceive as being toxic. In fact, it is in our own homes that we have the most exposure to toxins due to the products we use and the amount of time we spend there.

### **Home Environment**

As we discussed, you are forever being exposed to toxins outside of your control that affect your family's health, such as smog, factory pollution, exhaust and fumes from other vehicles, you name it. The question then becomes: can you control your home environment to create a safer environment for your children?

Air-tight construction has made our homes much more comfortable and warm, but with this air-tight construction comes possible lack of ventilation and fresh air. In addition, in an effort to keep homes clean and "fresh," the use of chemical cleaners and air fresheners as well as fire retardants, dyes, paints and glues, and off-gassing from new products made of plastics can put your body into toxic overload causing headaches, ill behaviour and mood, even contributing to the onset of more serious conditions such as autoimmunity and cancers.

Have you ever heard of "sick building syndrome?" It is often believed that the air inside the home is cleaner than the air in a smog-filled city, but we have learned that this is not so. Back in 1991, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) fact sheet defined Sick Building Syndrome and its cousin, Building Related Illness (BRI), as follows:



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The term "sick building syndrome" (SBS) is used to describe situations in which building occupants experience acute health and effects that appear to be linked to time spent in a building, but no specific illness or cause can be identified. The complaints may be localized in a particular room, or may be widespread throughout the building. In contrast, the term "building related illness" (BRI) is used when symptoms of diagnosable illness are identified and can be attributed directly to airborne building contaminants.

A 1984 World Health Organization Committee report suggested that up to 30 percent of new and remodeled buildings worldwide may be the subject of excessive complaints related to indoor air quality (IAQ). Often this condition is temporary, but some buildings have long-term problems. Frequently, problems result when a building is operated or maintained in a manner that is inconsistent with its original design or prescribed operating procedures. Sometimes indoor air problems are a result of poor building design or occupant activities.

(<https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/indoor-air-facts-no-4-sick-building-syndrome>)

Often the air we create inside the places where we live and work can make us sick. Air quality is essential to your health, and things such as airborne chemicals from household cleaners, molds and irritants, new furniture, and even your clothing or bedding can leach undesirable chemicals onto your skin or pollute the air in your own home.

In order to create a safe environment for your children, revisit the following and check for things that might be affecting your indoor air quality:

Not enough fresh air, use of perfumes and air fresheners, non-organic bedding and clothing (which harbour chemicals), new furniture, carpet (which can harbour both chemicals and irritants such as dust and molds), glues and home improvement materials such as paints that contain Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), exhaust from an attached garage (ensure there are no leaks into the main home, and don't leave vehicles to run in the garage), gasses such as radon and carbon monoxide (there are alarms you can purchase to detect both), home office equipment such as printers, possible allergens,



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excessive dust, indoor pets, chemically scented candles, chemically scented "air fresheners" for auto, home, cigarette/cigar smoke, dryer sheets, fabric cleaners, furniture polish, plastic toys and teething rings, herbicides, pesticides, new carpet off-gassing, detergents / dish soaps, fabric softeners, all non-natural, chemical cleaning products, new non-cotton/wool/alpaca clothing and bedding (always wash new fabrics before wearing), exposure to allergens and irritants such as mold, bacteria, dust, and pet dander.

If you do discover that there are items on this list that you would like to address, here are some tips to clean it up:

- X Don't re-decorate baby's room before birth or while your children live in that room
- ✓ Off-gas products such as plastic equipment or furniture before bringing them into your main living space and get rid of packaging pronto
- ✓ Buy organic bedding and clothing if you can or wash in a natural detergent before wear
- ✓ Skip the treatment of new upholstery with fire retardants and waterproofing if you can
- ✓ Avoid air fresheners like the plague
- ✓ Buy toys made of natural materials like wood or rubber and skip the plastic
- ✓ Use natural air fresheners, essential oil diffusers, and they will actually not only make your home smell great but will also improve the health of your family with their medicinal properties
- ✓ Use natural, biodegradable cleaning products and detergents
- ✓ Ventilate! Always have fresh air circulation indoors. Use air purifiers as needed to clean the air of dust, moulds, allergens, and chemicals
- ✓ Stop using chemical cleaners - like, today!
- ✓ Think about every single product you want to purchase, what it is made of, and what alternatives you have before you bring it into your home

**A Note About Hand Sanitizer:** In an effort to reduce sickness and to keep our bodies and homes clean, there has been an overuse of hand sanitizers and anti-bacterial soap that is actually creating super-bugs and a world of bacteria that are becoming resistant to our efforts to stomp them out. Some bacteria is good, and balance is the key, for your immune system and for the balance of your natural ecology.



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In the article “Anti-germ products may be adding to antibiotic resistance: Study,” it is reported that:

While the efficacy of these products is not under question, a consumer research organization says the long-term harm that overuse of these products can cause is contributing to emerging antibiotic resistance in the country.

With swine flu, gastric and other respiratory diseases growing by the year, anti-bacterials, such as triclosan, are being added to an increasing number of personal and home care products, says a study by Ahmedabad-based Consumer Education & Research Society (CERS) and its international partner, CHOICE, Australia.

The findings say that since anti-bacterials do not distinguish between bacteria, these can destroy good bacteria, which are vital for sound human health. Also, triclosan, the most common anti-bacterial ingredient, could be an endocrine disrupter as it interferes with both thyroid and sex hormones, the findings say. (<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/article3306851.ece>)

Therefore, when given the choice between an anti-bacterial hand sanitizer and good old soap and water, the soap and water will not only clean better but is non-toxic and better for your health.

### **Personal Care Products**

The skin is the largest organ in your body. It also sponges up whatever is put on it, including lotions, make-up, soaps, antiperspirants, and shampoos. Even baby shampoo or fresh smelling aftershave may not be so fresh. Most personal care products have an extensive list of chemical ingredients that are added to act as preservatives, emulsifiers, or fragrances. And even if you do not use some of these products, you may be inhaling whatever scents and fragrances that other people are spraying in your environment.



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In order to create a safe environment for your children, revisit the following and check for things you might be putting on your skin:

Toothpaste, chemical mouthwashes, toothpastes made from synthetic chemicals and containing fluoride, hair / skin products, dyes, soaps, and treatments - all commercial, non-natural, after shaves, perfumes, colognes, aluminum antiperspirants and deodorants, lip balm and lipstick, makeup, nail polish, etc.

If you do discover that there are items on this list that you would like to address, here are some tips to clean it up:

- X Never put anything on your skin that you would not eat
- ✓ Seek out and purchase chemical-free, natural body care products and fluoride-free toothpaste
- ✓ Read all labels, and know what you are putting on your skin and in your mouth
- ✓ Make your own! A quick google search can give you hundreds of recipes that are quick, easy, and cheap

If you want to learn more, the Environmental Working Group has an extensive list of harmful ingredients to watch out for and has published a great deal of information about safe personal care products. See their Skin Deep report at <http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>

### **Food and Water**

Food and water are our greatest source of health and the fuel by which our bodies run. Food can and does heal, nourish, and give life. But because our food supply has been altered so profoundly by the creation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), the preference for convenience and affordability over quality, and our fast ways of processing, preparing, and ingesting food, what we are feeding our children may not be as life-giving as we would hope. Chemicals and additives are added to most processed food products (think every aisle in the grocery store excluding, perhaps, the perimeter where you will find produce and meats), and what is fresh is often not organic or is taken home to be fried or microwaved, destroying or denaturing the nutrients they once contained.



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**A Note on Food Allergies:** Even though a food may be deemed “healthy,” it does not mean that that food is healthy for everyone. Every person has their own biochemical make-up, and each and every one of us has needs that are different than anyone else on the planet. And when it comes to food, some foods may be beneficial for one person but may cause all sorts of trouble for another.

Many people suffer from food allergies as well as food intolerances and food sensitivities, which are not “true” allergies that can cause anaphylaxis, but that are just as harmful. They are caused by a different immune reaction in the body and tend to present with different symptoms such as gastro-intestinal upset, ADHD behaviours, brain fog, and learning difficulty, and usually have a delayed reaction time of a couple of hours and up to one week. Many people do not know that their child’s hyperactivity could be due to a sensitivity to red food dye #4 or sugar, or if their inability to handle stressful situations or make decisions or have daily feelings of bloating and gas are due to what they are eating, but if you or your child exhibit such symptoms, it is most certainly worth your while to check out.

**A Note on Supplements:** Multi-vitamins and supplements are almost a necessity these days. Food just doesn’t have the nutritional value it once did, and although diet should most certainly be the number one source of nutrition, it is increasingly difficult to get everything your family needs through diet, alone.

Most children and adults need some form of supplement or another, whether it be a shot of fish oil per day or a probiotic. But be clear on this: supplements do not replace good, whole food.

According to Andrew Saul, writer of 12 books on orthomolecular medicine and nutrition and expert speaker for numerous film projects,

Edward A. Johnston, M.D., says that vitamin deficiencies are usually multiple deficiencies, which show up over a long period of time. "These deficiencies occur despite a balanced diet," says Dr. Johnston, "the balance of which is usually determined by older knowledge of nutrition, and influenced by conditions in





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commercial preparation and preservation." This is what "health nuts" have been saying for years: we eat a lopsided diet of way too many processed, cooked, devitalized foods and we are not going to get our vitamins from any balanced collection of such imbalanced foods.

([http://www.doctoryourself.com/vitamin\\_disease.html](http://www.doctoryourself.com/vitamin_disease.html))

Also, some supplements are better than others: many brands on the market can actually do more harm than good because their ingredients are poor or their manufacturing practices are substandard. Do not buy your vitamin supplements at a drug or grocery store, but buy only quality supplements at respected healthfood stores. Read the labels, check for unnecessary ingredients such as sugar and allergens such as wheat, and buy the cleanest brand you can find. After you have clarified what supplements are right for you or your children with the help of a qualified functional healthcare professional, the staff at a good healthfood store will be able to help you find what you need.

In order to create a safe environment for your children, revisit the following and check for things you might be feeding your family:

### *Check what's in your fridge.*

Is it junk food, packaged and processed food (anything in a bag, box, or can which often contain a laundry list of additives and chemicals with little of the original nutrients the "food" was meant to have), dairy that is pasteurized or homogenized, farm-raised fish, non-organic fruits, non-organic vegetables, non-range fed beef, non-fertile eggs from non-range fed chickens, processed meat products, soy products (except perhaps fermented products such as tempeh, natto, miso, and fermented soy sauce), refined grain and flour products, foods containing high fructose corn syrup, an excess of breads, cakes, cereals, cookies, crackers, and pastas, etc.

### *Take note of what you drink.*

Is it tap water (most municipalities add fluoride and chlorine), juice (which is full of sugar), alcohol, soda pop, sport drinks, drinks containing aspartame or other artificial sweeteners



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(these are NOT healthier than sugar and are actually excitotoxic to brain cells – in other words, they make the brain cells get so overexcited that they finally get exhausted and die.)

*How do you prepare and store your food?*

Beware of the use of aluminum foil in the oven or BBQ, BBQ'd food (as it is carcinogenic because it changes the chemical structure of the fats in the meat), aluminum cookware (aluminum has been proven to cause Alzheimer's), cooking with tap water or softened water, microwaved food, frying, plastic storage containers, plastic water bottles, plastics that contain BPA, plastic wrap, etc.

If you do discover that there are items on this list that you would like to address, here are some tips to clean it up:

- ✓ Shop the perimeter of the grocery store, skipping the aisles that contain the bags, boxes, and cans of processed, chemical-laden foods
- ✓ Read all labels - you will be surprised at what you'll find. If it is in a package or can, chances are that it contains ingredients that are processed or are chemicals used to preserve and enhance flavour. Reading labels also help you to identify hidden ingredients that you may not expect to be there such as gluten in processed meats, MSG in your favourite snack food, or GMO corn in your supplements
- ✓ Find a good source of filtered water and drink and cook with only that
- ✓ Switch to organic as much as possible. If you can't afford to go whole-hog organic, at least purchase the organic version of the most sprayed foods. The Environmental Working Group has made a list of the Dirty Dozen and the Clean Fifteen to help guide folks who are concerned about pesticides in their food, but remember, just because it is on the clean 15 list doesn't mean that it is chemical free – just a better choice
- ✓ Purchase non-GMO food
- ✓ If you eat animal products, eat animal products that are organic, pasture raised, and free-range as much as possible
- ✓ Prepare meals at home and as a family



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- ✓ Read the labels on your vitamins (not all things we think are healthy are, even vitamins) and never buy cheap vitamins from pharmacies or grocery stores – these vitamins are not bioavailable and may even be harmful to your organs
- ✓ Get to know your food and where it comes from. Buy only from a reputable healthfood store
- ✓ Prepare meals in advance and store them in the fridge and freezer to avoid bad decisions when on the run or at the end of a long day
- ✓ Get picky about what you feed yourself and your family
- ✓ Above all: Just eat real food

**Home Environment (Other Issues)**  
**Light Pollution and EMF Exposure**

Light pollution and electromagnetic fields are increasingly being recognised as a form of toxicity damaging to our health. Both of these dangers are very real, and there has recently been a significant amount of research on the dangers of the radiation our modern day conveniences such as electricity, computers, iPads, and iPhones present to us.

Electromagnetic Fields (or Electromagnetic Radiation, pollution, EMFs or EMRs), are fields of energy that surround us every day. Wires and transformers and radio waves transmit a dizzying array of electric and magnetic traffic as well as radiation. Our bodies are equipped to deal with some radiation - in fact, the sun bathes us in radiation every day, and the earth emits its own magnetic fields. It is part of how our natural world works.

But we are not meant to have to handle this constant barrage of EMFs that we have created, the artificial EMFs, nor are we to be disrupting our circadian rhythms (our natural sleep/wake cycle) through artificial light well into the time when our bodies need to be resting and repairing.



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Think about your body as an antenna conducting all of that energy. If there is nowhere to discharge that energy, then your body absorbs it, altering your body at a cellular level, a DNA level. Michael Neuert, Electrical Engineer and EMF expert, says that:

In the beginning, scientists assumed that EMFs could not affect our health because EMFs are not an “ionizing” type of radiation. This means that they cannot ionize molecules in the very dangerous way that x-rays and nuclear radiation can harm us.

Scientists were then surprised to discover that EMFs can indeed cause hazardous biological effects by another method — by heating up sensitive tissues within our bodies. Today, most of the official EMF safety standards for the general public are designed to protect us from these potential heating effects.

But scientists are now in the process of discovering yet another way that EMFs can affect our health. Similar to the way that EMFs cause electromagnetic interference (EMI) problems for sensitive electronic and computer systems, a growing body of research suggests that low-level EMFs can also influence or interfere with certain sensitive “bio-electromagnetic” processes within our cells, brains and bodies. In fact we are learning that the human body is an amazing “bio-electronic” living machine, utilizing many sensitive electromagnetic processes for the proper functioning of our brain, nervous system, immune system and other organs. (<http://emfcenter.com/new-research-shows-how-emfs-affect-us/>)

The extent of the damage that EMF exposure can cause the human body is unknown, yet with the research that is coming out on the subject, we do know enough to be concerned. In her book, *Zapped: Why your cell phone shouldn't be your alarm clock and 1,268 ways to outsmart the hazards of electronic pollution*, Ann Louise Gittleman gives us a bit of science “of what happens when you're overexposed to EMFs” (Gittleman, *Zapped*, p. 27).

Your cells get overwhelmed by messages from inside and outside your body...  
Your cells become unglued...  
Chemicals pouring from your ruptured cells damage your cellular DNA...  
EMFs may disrupt normal cell division...



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EMFs create oxidative stress that further damages DNA and other physical processes. (Gittleman, Zapped, pp. 27-29)

“Cell phones and other wireless devices, in particular, emit radiation, and that radiation penetrates even deeper into a child’s brain due to the thinness of their skulls and the fluid content of their young and developing brains,” said Anne Louise Gittleman in a 2015 interview with The Children’s Health Summit ([www.childrenshealthsummit.com](http://www.childrenshealthsummit.com)). In his article “Physics and biology of mobile telephony” published in The Lancet, GH Hyland, PhD reports that:

Preadolescent children can be expected to be more vulnerable to any adverse health effects than adults because absorption of GSM microwaves is greatest in an object about the size of a child's head, because of the “head resonance” effect and the greater ease with which the radiation can penetrate the thinner skull of an infant. Also the multiframe repetition frequency of 8-34 Hz and the 2 Hz pulsing in the DTX mode of cellphones lie in the range of the alpha and delta brain-waves, respectively. In a child, alpha waves do not replace delta waves as a stable activity until the age of about 12 years. Furthermore, the immune system, whose efficacy is degraded by this kind of radiation, is less robust in children. This makes them less able to cope with any adverse health effect that might be provoked by chronic exposure, not only to the pulsed microwave radiation but also to the more penetrating low-frequency magnetic fields associated with the current surges from the handset battery which can reach 40  $\mu$ T (microtesla) (peak) near the back of the case. ([http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(00\)03243-8/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(00)03243-8/fulltext))

Sleep/wake cycle-disrupting blue lights from computer screens and harsh overhead lights on at night, cell phone usage, stimulating activities such as playing video games or watching movies before bed have an over-stimulating and chemically damaging effect on the brain encouraging everything from slow healing to sleep disturbances. In addition, radiation from cell phone usage has been linked to cancer.



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Dr. Vini Khurana, an award-winning, well-published Australian neurosurgeon and expert on the subject of the effects of cell phones on human physiology, stated that mobile phones have a greater health danger than smoking cigarettes or exposure to asbestos. His findings testify that using a cell phone for more than 10 years doubles the risk of developing brain cancer...Dr. Khurana affirms that an increasing number of cases of brain tumors in heavy mobile phone users have been reported, especially on the side of the head where the user favored holding the phone. (<http://www.electricsense.com/302/cell-phone-radiation-tobacco/>)

Europe has gotten serious about banning cell phone usage for children and wifi in schools ([wifiinschools.com/uploads/.../europe\\_seeks\\_to\\_ban\\_mobile\\_and\\_wifi\\_in\\_schools.pdf](http://wifiinschools.com/uploads/.../europe_seeks_to_ban_mobile_and_wifi_in_schools.pdf)), and many parents in the US and Canada are also rallying for this same purpose. The fact is, scientists know that these things are harmful to our health, we just don't yet know the extent.

In order to create a safe environment for your children, revisit the following, and note your exposure:

Blue lights in the bedrooms, the family computer, too much screen time, iPhones and iPods, alarm clock, poor or inadequate sleep, non-natural, non-full-spectrum lighting at home, non-natural, non-full-spectrum lighting at work, blue light into the night, computer work at night, sleeping with lights on, cell phones (use speakerphone or airtube earbuds), electric blankets, electric razors, electric toothbrushes, electric hair dryers, wireless headsets (bluetooth), waterbed heaters, x-rays (only take when absolutely necessary), living within 300 feet of telephone poles/transformers, "wired" bedroom containing TVs, computers, video games, handheld devices, etc.



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If you do discover that there are items on this list that you would like to address, here are some tips to clean it up:

X Do not sit or sleep close to the following (even if it is in another room as EMFs travel through walls).

- computer monitors
- TV's
- electric panels or fuse boxes

And when you can, stay at least 6 feet away from:

- freezers
- ovens
- refrigerators
- alarm clocks

X Do not hold a laptop in your lap

- ✓ Remove all sources of light from your bedroom while you sleep
- ✓ Remove the computers, TVs, and video games from all bedrooms
- ✓ Avoid harsh, overhead lighting in the evening leading up to bedtime, try amber light bulbs
- ✓ Read, draw, visit or play games instead of watching TV or computer work
- ✓ Never let a child use a cellular phone; Remember that cell phones are NOT toys
- ✓ If your teens have cell phones, have them text when they need to communicate using their phone and have them call only in an emergency
- ✓ Limit cell phone and other electronic usage for you, too
- ✓ Keep phones and other devices away from your pregnant belly
- ✓ Teach your kids good EMF hygiene
- ✓ Don't use a cell phone in the car as it will amplify the effects
- ✓ Try using earthing or grounding products to protect you and your children from the EMF exposure you may not be able to avoid
- ✓ Walk barefoot on the earth to discharge. You will love that! Know that feeling you get when walking on the beach. That is what this is: earthing
- ✓ Turn off your wifi as much as possible, at least at night



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**A Note About Internet Safety:** There is nothing our children cannot access from their family computer. And the internet is not always a safe place. Therefore, it is important to create healthy boundaries around your child's usage of technology. Parents often feel that their children are sometimes lost to them, immersed in a world of blue lights and virtual relationships, and parents want their children to have communication and social skills and healthy real-life relationships with their peers, family, and themselves.

Dr. Margaret Stager, Metro-Health Medical Center Pediatrician in Cleveland, Ohio, goes on record: "I'm concerned about it," she says, "We know kids need their sleep — they need eight to 10 hours every night...When they miss school, they increase their chances of messing up their futures, too. Those are the kids that get in trouble with the law or in trouble in the neighborhood...it's a cascade effect."

Dr. Stager goes on to point out that loss of sleep from late night texting can be responsible for kids losing out on higher education and missing out on creating lives that are worthwhile.

Loss of sleep in young people has also been shown to cause obesity and even more serious conditions like diabetes, depression, heart disease and serious mental health issues. (<http://www.electricsense.com/704/texting-addiction-kids-face-health-dangers-from-cell-phone-abuse/>)

The impact of the growing dependence this generation has on technology and the influence the lights, stimulation, and instant gratification has on their developing brains is just starting to unfold. The evidence is mounting, and it does not look good. To provide a safe environment for children, it is prudent to release the hold technology has on them by helping them to unplug by going on a media diet, limiting usage (especially at night), creating a sleep environment free of electronics, engaging in more active activities that take you off of the couch and out of the house, and by leading by example.



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## Out and About

Life is busy. That's no surprise. Many families spend a great deal of time in their vehicles running back and forth from events, classes, games, and visiting with family and friends. The car can be a second home, and the environment in that car will affect the health of your children just as profoundly as the environment in your home. In fact, your car is actually smaller and the environment within perhaps more unhealthy.

Your child's school environment and your work environment will also be significant players in the overall health of your family, as will any place that you spend a good amount of your time.

In order to create a safe environment for your children, revisit the following, and consider making some changes while you are out and about:

Check your car and work environment for everything on this list you would look for in your own home, ditto for your child's school, look for anything that may be polluting the air in your vehicle such as fresheners (which emit phthalates). New vehicles off-gas all sorts of chemicals into the air from upholstery, plastics, glues, foam, and dyes, baby car seats have the same issues, etc.

If you do discover that there are items on this list regarding your vehicle that you would like to address, here are some tips to clean it up:

- ✓Keep new vehicles out of the sun, and open the windows to ventilate OR keep it in the sun with the windows open if you can and bake out some of the chemicals. Just don't use the vehicle during this process
- ✓Ditch the air fresheners
- ✓When getting your vehicle cleaned, ask them to steam clean it with either straight water or a natural, chemical-free soap (buy your own and bring it for them to use, if you need to)
- ✓Wipe down your interior regularly
- ✓Keep the air vent pulling air from the outside



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- ✓ Turn off your heat or air conditioning when sitting in traffic to avoid pulling in exhaust from the cars around you
- ✓ Buy an air purifier for your vehicle that takes out not only dust and mould, but chemicals, as well
- ✓ Buy used

**A note on Chemical Sensitivity:** As we have already discussed, currently, over 200 chemicals can be found in the umbilical cords of babies born today. This statistic is alarming proof of how many chemicals we are now exposed to on a daily basis. You may be under some serious chemical burden, and your body has to struggle hard to detoxify and clean up the mess. You would be hard pressed to find anyone on the planet who is not touched by the chemical pollution that floats around the planet. This toxic burden is contributing to the rise in many illnesses such as autoimmunity and autism and is even classified as an illness all its own called Multiple Chemical Sensitivity.

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is a hypersensitivity or allergy-like reaction to common synthetic chemicals such as solvents, gases, and perfumes. It occurs when the toxic burden is too much for the person's body to bear.

The possible list of symptoms of Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is almost endless - varies from one patient to the next. Also worthy of mention here is the fact that there is no sharp demarcation between the symptoms of MCS and those of ME/CFS/CFIDS/PVFS (myalgic encephalomyelitis - chronic fatigue), but that most sufferers of MCS complain of at least several of the following:

- burning, stinging eyes
- wheezing, breathlessness
- nausea
- extreme fatigue/lethargy
- headache/migraine/vertigo/dizziness
- poor memory & concentration
- runny nose (rhinitis)
- sore throat, cough



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- sinus problems
- skin rashes and/or itching skin
- sensitivity to light & noise
- sleeping problems
- digestive upset
- muscle & joint pain. (<http://www.multiplechemicalsensitivity.org/>)

Regardless of whether you have a diagnosable condition such as MCS, if you are experiencing some of the symptoms above, chemical exposure can be a potential cause. It can also be a contributing factor for any number of chronic illnesses and cancer. A reduction of exposure to chemicals as an everyday practice, chemical awareness, and encouraging good elimination and detoxification are the best protection methods from chemical toxicity.

### **Relationship, Happiness, and Mental State**

How you and your children connect (or disconnect) or how you and your spouse get along can profoundly affect the health of your entire family. Stress levels run high in the modern household, and when stress rises, your ability to fight illness and disease and your level of happiness take a dive. Your sleep can suffer, your work can suffer, your sense of control over your life can also suffer. Your ability to care for yourself and your family can suffer.

Stress = illness. Period.

Addressing these issues will create a safe and nurturing environment for your children. A harmonious home life is sometimes difficult to attain, but it is a goal well worth the effort.

“Studies show that positive psychological states, such as joy, happiness, and positive energy, as well as characteristics such as life satisfaction, hopefulness, optimism, and a sense of humour, result in lower mortality rates and extended longevity in both healthy and diseased populations” (Lissa Rankin, MD, *Mind Over Medicine*, p. 121).



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What can contribute to disharmony in the home are stressful schedules, lack of rest and downtime, not eating at the dinner table together, no boundaries between outside world and home time (texting during meals, etc.), toxic relationships, negative mindset, lack of quality family time, no time to listen to children or have fun with them, etc. At times the challenges may be greater than the ones listed above such as chronically ill family members, divorce, or a death in the family, and these more serious challenges may require the recruitment of some outside help.

- ✓ Introduce into your daily routine mind/body practices such as meditation, yoga, or gratitude. Even a few minutes a day to start will create BIG change
- ✓ Do it as a family, but be sure to set some time aside just for you
- ✓ Lead by example
- ✓ s.l.o.w...d.o.w.n; pay attention to your cues - if you or your children are exhausted, skip that soccer game
- ✓ Build relationship and connection with your friends and family: eat together, prepare meals together, vacation together...the key word here is "together"
- ✓ Limit the time you spend with people who are toxic to you and your family

It is a state of chronic stress, whether it be internal or external, that wears down our bodies and minds. Just think of chronic stress like speeding around in a car with the pedal to the metal at all times. Something is bound to break down or fall off.

Addressing anything that creates stress will ensure that you can create an emotionally and physically safe and nurturing environment for your child.

**RECAP:**

One way to create a safe and nurturing environment for your children is to identify where you can control your environment and do your best to eradicate toxins and reduce your family's exposure.

Aid your children's bodies to detoxify by feeding them chemical-free food and water.



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Relationships, emotions, and mental state, contribute to happiness and harmony, reducing stress levels to make way for recovery.

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