

# The Terrible Toxics

## Americans Want to be Safer, Not Sicker

Every American faces daily exposure to toxic chemicals in the food we eat, the products in our homes, the water we drink, and the air we breathe. Exposure to these toxic chemicals is linked to hormone disruption, infertility, asthma, heart, kidney, and liver disease, developmental problems, cancer and more.

The risks are higher for children, pregnant women, and people living near chemical and manufacturing plants, agricultural operations, refineries, power plants, ports, airports, and highways.

## 12 Terrible Toxics and Where We Find Them

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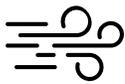
### The Food We Eat

- Mercury
- Pesticides



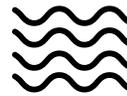
### The Products in Our Homes

- Phthalates
- Lead in Paint and Soil
- Formaldehyde



### The Air We Breathe

- PM 2.5 (Soot)
- Ground-Level Ozone (Smog)
- Benzene
- Formaldehyde
- Vinyl Chloride



### The Water We Drink and Use

- PFAS (Forever Chemicals)
  - Lead
  - Arsenic
  - TCE (Trichloroethylene)
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This is happening because of changes that weaken corporate accountability. Political leadership at today's EPA is giving greater leeway to polluting companies by rolling back health protections and delaying enforcement of toxic chemical safeguards.

## **At a Glance: Health Risks to Adults, Babies, Children and Older Americans**

Exposure to pesticides, other toxic chemicals and pollution is linked to:

- Hormone disruption, including thyroid disease, early puberty, obesity and mood disorders
- Reproductive harm, including low sperm count for men, difficulty getting and staying pregnant for women, pregnancy complications, fetal heart defects, preterm birth, and low birth weight
- Cancer, including lung, liver, kidney, bladder, blood cancers, and rare liver angiosarcoma
- Heart disease and stroke
- Permanent brain damage in children, including IQ loss and developmental delays
- Immune system suppression and reduced vaccine effectiveness
- Asthma, chronic bronchitis, and long-term lung damage
- Organ damage, including liver toxicity and kidney damage

## **At a Glance: Scope of Americans' Exposure**

- 172 million people are exposed to PFAS/Forever Chemicals in their drinking water
- 185 million are served by water systems with detectable lead
- All 50 states have had fish advisories triggered by mercury contamination
- 85 million breathe unhealthy air year-round from soot PM 2.5 pollution
- 125+ million breathe with unhealthy ozone levels
- 34.6 million homes contain lead paint hazards

## **The Bottom Line**

For more than 50 years, the U.S. EPA's bedrock mission has been to protect Americans' health from industries whose operations can cause toxic harm.

Americans have a right to know the health risks they face and to rely on systems that make them safer, not sicker.

Industry and the EPA must make those risks transparent and ensure companies abide by safeguards that put Americans' health first – preventing exposure before harm occurs – not after children are sick and communities are contaminated.

## **Sources**

See the full [Terrible Toxics: Situation Report](#) for bibliography of sources.