



Center's Tip of the Month: Back-to-School

-- Tips for a toxic-free start to the school year --

As summer draws to a close there is one thing on the mind of every child and parent: school!

Preparing your child for his or her return to school is a great opportunity to look for safer products for your children. School supplies can contain harmful chemicals such as BPA and phthalates. Center [research](#) has found links between exposure to BPA and phthalates and health outcomes such as eczema, behavioral problems and delays in development.

Therefore, we urge you to please keep these helpful tips in mind to avoid unnecessary exposure while at school. Start with one or try a few on your road to a healthier school year!



Tips & Resources

Choose safer alternatives for school supplies

- [Backpacks:](#) If you are buying a new backpack, look one for natural fibers, and skip those made with PVC (#3 plastic). If natural fibers aren't an option, polyester and nylon are better options.
- [Notebooks & binders:](#) Choose notebooks and binders without plastic covers, as they are likely made from PVC. Look for recycled cardboard, natural fibers or "no PVC" on the label.
- [Hand washing:](#) Choose sanitizers that contain ethanol but not fragrance. Choose liquid hand soaps that don't contain triclosan, triclocarban or fragrance.

Take chemicals out of lunchtime

- [Beverage holders](#) Use BPA-free or aluminum thermoses when sending drinks or hot food to school.
- [Sandwich bags](#) Choose reusable, BPA-free containers instead of plastic lunch bags or plastic wrap. These chemicals can contain dangerous additives such as phthalates, lead, cadmium and other toxins that may be harmful to your child's health.
- [Food containers](#) Replace scratched plastic containers with BPA-free options or metal containers.
- [Lunch boxes](#) Avoid lunch boxes containing lead paint, PVC, BPA, and antimicrobial chemicals. Try a reusable cloth lunch bag, BPA-free plastic or unpainted stainless steel.
- [Food](#) send your child with fresh fruit and vegetables instead of prepackaged snacks with plastic packaging. Choose pesticide-free or organic produce whenever possible.

Read more in these sources:

- [Healthy school supplies/school environment](#); CHEJ's [Back-to-School Guide to PVC-Free School Supplies](#), Inhabitat's [7 Affordable and Non-Toxic School Supplies Every Kid Needs](#) & CHEJ's [Back-to-School Environmental Checklist](#)
- [Fresh Food](#): EWG's [Dirty Dozen](#)
- [Greening your routine](#): EWG's [Healthy Home Tips: Back-to-School Guide](#) & Huffington Post's [Green Your Back-To-School Routine](#)

Have questions? Want to learn more? Please email us at cccehcolumbia@gmail.com!



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