

**LIMIT YOUR  
EXPOSURE.**  
**REDUCE YOUR CANCER RISK.**

Para-Dichlorobenzene, found in some mothballs and toilet-deodorizer blocks, causes cancer in animals and is a possible cause of liver and kidney cancer in humans. It's a colorless to white solid with a strong, pungent odor. When exposed to air, it slowly changes from a solid to a vapor, so you may continue to breathe in this dangerous chemical for quite some time. Try a safe alternative: Repel moths and freshen air with cedar chips or dried lavender. They're choices you can live with.

**1-800-464-HELP** [www.delawarehealthyhomes.org](http://www.delawarehealthyhomes.org)  
**Learn more about household toxins that cause cancer.**



DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
Division of Public Health  
Health Systems Protection

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Made possible with the cooperation of the Delaware Cancer Consortium,  
and underwritten in part by the Delaware Health Fund.

# Make sure your home is a healthy one.

Did you know there are many unhealthy substances you're exposed to every day in your home? Things you'd never guess contained harmful toxins can hurt you. Protect yourself and your family. This quick fact sheet helps you learn how you can reduce your exposure and limit your cancer risk.

**A CLEANING PRODUCTS**—Be a diligent label-reader. If a cleaning product is hazardous, it will say so on the label. Be aware of the words *Toxic*, *Flammable* or *Combustible*, *Corrosive* or *Strong Sensitizer*, and, of course, *Danger*, *Poison*, *Warning* or *Caution*. The real safety of any product is difficult to know because there is no requirement to list ingredients on the product label. You'll only see cautionary words like the ones above.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Think about making your own cleaning products. Mayonnaise can take rings off of wood, remove sap from your car and even lift crayon marks from furniture. Make furniture polish from 3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar. Cornstarch can keep carpets clean and remove grease stains.

**B DRY CLEANING**—When you take that plastic bag off of your dry cleaning in your closet, you're releasing toxic chemicals into a small space—and opening the door to a cancer risk. According to the EPA, inhaling the fumes of perchloroethylene—a popular dry-cleaning solvent—can cause cancer.

*(Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Total Exposure Assessment Methodology [TEAM] studies)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Remove the bag from your dry cleaning to air out the clothing in a well-ventilated area before you bring it into your house.

**C HERBICIDES AND PESTICIDES**—Recent studies have shown that there's a 600% greater risk of childhood leukemia when kids are exposed to pesticides. Products used to kill household pests and the ones that are spread on your lawn can affect your children and pets. *(Source: School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley; Environmental Health Investigations Branch, California Department of Health Services; Stamford University of Medicine)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Pull weeds instead of poisoning them. Or, use organic weed control methods such as corn gluten meal to keep weeds from emerging and to fertilize your lawn.

**D MOTHBALLS AND AIR FRESHENERS**—Mothballs contain something called paradichlorobenzene. It's a chemical you'll also find in air fresheners. According to the EPA, it can cause headaches, swollen eyes, loss of appetite, nose and throat irritations and even cancer. *(Source: Environmental Protection Agency, TEAM studies)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** To prevent moth damage and freshen air, use cedar chips, cedar blocks, dried lavender and whole peppercorns, or use airtight containers for storage.

**E RADON**—It's a radioactive gas that you can't see, smell or feel. According to the EPA, radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. It comes from the soil and rock beneath your home and seeps into your basement. *(Source: Environmental Protection Agency)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

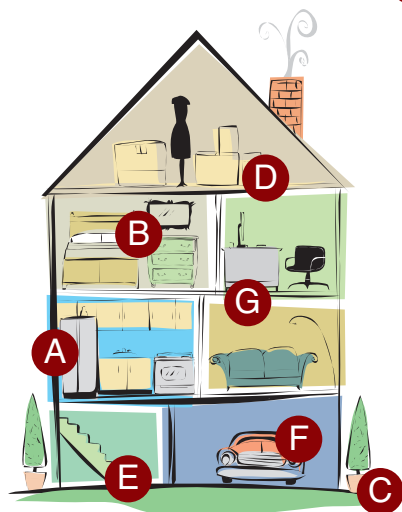
Test your home. Kits are available in most hardware stores. You may qualify for a free test kit. Call 1-800-464-HELP for details.

**F SPRAY PAINT AND PAINT STRIPPERS**—Always follow directions on the labels of these products. Some may cause cancer, reproductive problems, or damage to the liver, kidney or brain. *(Source: Environmental Protection Agency, TEAM studies)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Wear gloves, avoid getting the products on your skin and use the products outdoors if possible.

**G TOBACCO SMOKE**—There are more than 4,000 chemicals in secondhand tobacco smoke, the smoke breathed in by nonsmokers. According to the American Heart Association, such exposure can cause cancer and heart and lung disease. *(Source: 1992 study, The American Heart Association's Council on Cardiopulmonary and Critical Care, and a 2002 study, International Agency for Research on Cancer—an affiliate of the World Health Organization)*

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:** Ask those who smoke to take it outside. Do not allow smoking in your home or car. Insist that childcare workers not smoke around your children.



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