
Non-Toxic Choices for Food Preparation, Cookware, and Dishes

We often think about the quality of the foods we purchase and prepare to ensure good nutrition. It's also important to consider the products we use to cook, bake, eat, and store food, as these can also potentially place our health at risk. Certain types of kitchenware can discharge toxic fumes, chemicals, or other toxic components into our food. Over time, these toxins can accumulate in our bodies and potentially damage our health.

Cutting Boards

Plastic cutting boards may contain toxins such as bisphenol A (BPA) or phthalates, which are known to be hormone-disrupting and carcinogens (cancer-causing chemicals). Small bits of plastic containing these chemicals can also intermingle with foods as the surfaces sustain small nicks and cuts. Plastic cutting boards also have a greater tendency to accumulate bacteria in their knife-scarred surfaces than wooden ones.

Best choices: Bamboo and wood. Always wash your wood or bamboo cutting boards with hot, soapy water and allow to air dry.

Cookware

The most popular brands of cookware used today are nonstick. Unfortunately, Teflon® and other nonstick coatings contain chemicals that can cause cancer and other health problems. Heating these pots and pans can release toxic fumes, and some chemicals may also leach directly into your food.

Best choices: Food-grade stainless steel, cast iron, copper, porcelain-enameled cast iron, oven-safe glass, stainless-steel-lined copper, and high-quality, nontoxic ceramic-lined cookware. Also, look for cookware labeled as free of PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) and PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid).

Dishes

Plastics, including melamine dishes, may contain a variety of chemicals that have been linked to cancer and other health problems. Acidic foods and beverages can increase the leaching of chemicals into plastic dishware. In

addition, heating and serving hot foods on plastic and melamine dishes can increase your exposure to chemical compounds. Plastic and melamine dishes are often used for children, a population that is particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures.

Best choices: Ceramic, porcelain, glass, wood, bamboo, type 304 stainless steel, and 100% food-grade silicone (this does not have plastic fillers).

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