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Blog

Comprehensive Explores How to Reduce Food Packaging-Based Breast Cancer Risks

October 22, 2024

Comprehensive Cancer Centers explores how to reduce risks from food packaging in the light of a study which shows many health risks from toxins during food prep.

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reduce all risks associated with food packaging, preparation and consumption.

There are steps that can be taken, however, to reduce breast cancer risks associated with toxins in foods.

Food packaging plays an important role in preserving freshness, protecting against contamination, and extending shelf lives of many products. Growing research, as noted in the report, suggests that certain materials in food packaging pose health risks due to chemical migration into the food they are supposed to protect. Bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, heavy metals, and other harmful chemicals can seep into food, especially when exposed to heat, common in Las Vegas, or from extended periods of storage.

Here are a few ways to reduces these risks:

Choose Packaging-Free Options – You can reduce health risks from food packaging by minimizing reliance on packaged foods. Grocery stores and farmers’ markets offer packaging-free options for important items including fruits, vegetables and grains. Shopping in bulk, bringing your own containers, or opting for fresh, unpackaged fruits and vegetables, are easy ways to avoid exposure to harmful chemicals in packaging materials. To summarize:

- **Go Bulk:** Shop at bulk food stores and fill your own containers with dry goods like grains, nuts, and legumes.
- **Go Local:** Visit farmers’ markets and buy produce directly from local farmers, many of whom offer packaging-free products. The following provides [a list of farmer’s markets available in the Las Vegas Valley](#).
- **Go Local(er):** Grow your own vegetables or fruits at home to avoid packaging entirely.

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of these chemicals.

If you are using products that come in cardboard packaging, avoid ones treated with water-resistant coatings or contains plastic linings. When you can't avoid using plastics, look for ones that are labeled BPA-free. They may still contain other harmful chemicals like BPS (bisphenol-S).

Pay Attention to Recycling Codes – Some types of plastics are more harmful than others. Understanding recycling codes on plastic packaging can help avoid them. The recycling code number, typically between 1 and 7, is found on the bottom of plastic containers. Each number represents a different type of plastic. Some are more prone to releasing harmful chemicals. Try to avoid materials using the following recycling codes:

- **#3 (PVC):** PVC, or polyvinyl chloride, often contains harmful additives like phthalates, which can get into food.
- **#6 (Polystyrene):** Commonly found in foam take-out containers and disposable cups, polystyrene may release styrene, a chemical linked to cancer.
- **#7 (Other):** This category includes polycarbonate plastics, which often contain BPA. Be cautious of packaging labeled with this number.

Limit Exposure to Canned Foods – Canned foods are convenient, but they often come with health risks due to lining of their cans. Cans can be coated with a resin that contains BPA. BPA can get into the food, acidic products like tomatoes, has been linked to hormone disruption, reproductive issues, and an increased risk of cancer.

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Avoid reheating food in plastic. Never microwave food in plastic containers or plastic wrap. The heat can cause chemicals to leach into the food. Always use microwave-safe glass or ceramic containers for reheating food

- Freeze Food in Safe Materials: If freezing food, don't use plastic wrap or bags. Instead, use freezer-safe glass containers or stainless steel.

Be Cautious with Takeout and Disposable Packaging – Most takeout containers are made from polystyrene foam, plastics, and other materials that may release harmful chemicals. Frequent consumption of food from these sources increases exposure to potentially toxic substances.

You can be better informed and make smarter choices by looking out for certain brands who offer options with fewer toxins. This includes brands that use sustainable, compostable, or biodegradable packaging materials. A good place to start learning about [options for safer packaging can be found in this article](#). From there, do your own research to buy as smart as possible.

Reducing health risks associated with food packaging is possible through informed decision-making and lifestyle changes. By choosing packaging-free or safer alternatives, avoiding harmful plastics, limiting exposure to canned foods, and adopting better storage practices, consumers can significantly reduce their risk of exposure to toxic chemicals. Moreover, supporting companies that prioritize safer packaging can drive industry-wide change, ultimately leading to healthier food systems for everyone.

Comprehensive Cancer Centers Can Help

Physicians at Comprehensive Cancer Centers provide a variety of treatment



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