Research has revealed that toxic chemicals in our daily lives may play a role in the increase of many serious health issues. The good news: The more you know about these harmful chemicals, the more you can safeguard yourself, and those you love most.

WHY ARE LONG-TERM HEALTH ISSUES ON THE RISE?

It is impossible to peg the escalating incidence of serious health issues to any one thing—but research indicates that toxic chemicals play a role. Exposure to “environmental toxins” happens through our physical environment (houses, workplaces, schools, and parks); food and water; and our cleaning products, our furniture, and our cosmetics.

SMALL DOSES ADD UP

For many chemicals, a single exposure is unlikely to cause serious harm, but over time, small doses add up. The lipstick we wear, the food we eat, and the soap we use to clean our children’s hands often contain harmful chemicals that enter our bodies, hide away in our bones or fat, and build up over time. To make matters even more complicated, some chemicals can be more harmful in combination with other chemicals. The impacts of these chemicals may not be apparent for years.

SMALL EXPOSURES COUNT

Not all chemicals are bad (water, after all, is a chemical), but some are toxic, and even tiny doses can be incredibly potent. Chemicals that disrupt the endocrine (or hormone) system are most dangerous in small doses, as they mimic the way our bodies naturally interact with hormones. And when our bodies are undergoing certain periods of development (in the womb, during infancy, puberty), we are more susceptible to hormone disruption, which can have big health effects later in life.

RESOURCES:
Healthy Child Healthy World (healthychild.org), Environmental Working Group (ewg.org), Campaign for Safe Cosmetics (safecosmetics.org), Breast Cancer Fund (breastcancerfund.org), Safer Chemicals Healthy Families (saferchemicals.org)