

Four Elements of Healthy Home Products

by Danielle Hope Hier

VOCs, asbestos, lead, mildew, mold, formaldehyde, dioxins, FD&C, titanium dioxide, bituminous coal, diethylene glycol, DEA, TEA, MEA, diethanolamine, nitrates, phthalates, surfactants... With all the varying strains of toxins out there, it's amazing that I've lasted this long.

You see, I'm an allergic reaction waiting to happen. I was the child who cried over spilled milk, and years of people telling me, "Danielle, you're too sensitive" has turned me into a self-fulfilling prophesy. I break out into hives from detergents and dust mites, I get severe headaches from cleaning products, and I was the rebel youth who tried – unsuccessfully – to take up smoking when I first escaped to Manhattan in '95. Three cigarettes and one bronchial pneumonia infection later, and I quickly learned that a harmonious relationship with the environment was vital for my health.

The problem is, there is so much technical information about what to avoid, it's overwhelming, leaving many people throwing their hands up in the air, saying, "I give up. Come and get me." For me, reading product labels is my version of watching a horror movie. At least, it's as scary as one.

I'd like to offer a user-friendly approach for those on the starter path of using envi-

ronmentally friendly products that not only protect the earth, but offer self-preserving attributes as well. This is by no means a comprehensive list of products and companies, but it will get your foot on the path.

Greek philosopher Empedocles believed that all matter was composed of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. Taking those four simple elements, imagine making one change in each area for a healthier you.

Earth. What we put into the earth will affect what we get out of it. Surface runoff from urea nitrogen in typical fertilizers have been linked to red tide and groundwater pollution, not to mention the potential death of the plant you might be growing for food.

If you're wondering how this affects you, consider potential disease from groundwater pollution, respiratory infection from red tide, and poisoning from algae-infested shellfish (that we might ingest).

One healthy product to consider in the Earth category is Dynamite Plant food by Florikan. Dynamite offers a time-release, biodegradable resin shell that adjusts to soil temperature by closing its pores during extreme cold and opening during warm weather. It also withstands soil temperatures up to 77 degrees. Because it is made with ammoniac nitrogen rather than urea (which requires the plant to break down nutrients), Dynamite is absorbed more readily by the plant, reducing the amount of surface runoff during heavy rain.

Water. Many escape the Florida heat by jumping into a nice cool pool. I am sorry to take the fun away, but chlorine (as a water treatment for pools) is linked to cancer, heart disease, arteriosclerosis, and premature aging.

Steve Wright of Wright Pool Care informed me that he began promoting chlorine-free pool systems when his now two-year-old nephew began suffering from severe eczema and couldn't swim in a traditional pool.

Wright Pool Care offers an inexpensive copper ionization system, which kills algae and water-borne pathogens while actually improving your skin.

Another plus is that copper is a natural anti-inflammatory.

Air (Sky). In an email recently, Jessica Croghan-Ingraham, a Shaklee Independent Distributor, wrote to me: "Since over 90 percent of poison exposures occur at home (according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers) and household cleaners are at the top of the list, many families are looking for alternatives to clean without bringing harmful chemicals into their home." VOCs (volatile organic compounds) found in many home-cleaning products evaporate into the air we breathe, contributing to headaches, respiratory problems, rashes, long-term nervous system damage, and cancer.

Shaklee offers a Get Clean line of home-cleaning products that produce no harmful fumes, have no VOCs, and are free of ammonia, chlorine bleach, phenol, and formaldehyde.

Fire (Sun). No, I'm not going to now begin my dissertation on the burning of fossil fuels. What I am going to explore is the final element of Fire, or, in this case, the heat element associated with Fire, the sun.

Interesting to me is how many sunscreens designed to protect from skin cancer contain suspected carcinogens such as parabens and titanium dioxide. Kind of defeats the purpose, doesn't it? Parabens also contribute to dermatitis and tumors.

One Fire element product to consider is UV Natural by Green Wave Eco-Surf Company. This sunscreen provides an SPF 30 with UVA/C/C protection and is produced without perfumes, parabens, or titanium dioxide. What it does contain is zinc and other anti-aging ingredients while also protecting the wearer from the sun.

Visit all four companies mentioned at their exhibitor booths at Efest 2007 on November 17 to find out more information about their complete product lines.

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