

Planning for a Healthy Home, Body, and Baby

Reducing Exposure to Environmental Toxins
Before, During, and After Pregnancy



For more information, please contact:

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Nick says goodbye to his expectant wife Diane and soon to arrive baby as he goes to work.

Both of you take care today, OK?

Yes, we will and don't forget to ask for tomorrow off.





Try to relax.
Are you still going to
FaceTime with your
friends this weekend?

Yes, they will help us get our home
ready before the baby arrives.
They have tips on safe cleaning and
disinfecting to share.



Didn't we just clean
surfaces last week
to reduce the risk of
spreading infections?



Cleaning doesn't kill
germs like disinfecting
does. That's why it's also
important to disinfect
counters, doorknobs,
light switches, remote
controls, and even your
cell phone frequently
in order to kill
viruses and bacteria.



Oh, so cleaning just gets rid of the dirt and grime
and disinfecting destroys bacteria and sanitizes?

Right!

Leslie calls Ashley

Hello?

Hi Ashley, what are you up to?

I'm at home, just finished polishing my nails. I feel safer at home.

Ooh, what nail polish are you using? I'm always in the search for brands that steer clear of the "toxic trio."

Toxic trio?

Formalde-WHAT?

Yes, dibutyl phthalates, toluene, and formaldehyde.

Formaldehyde. Check the list of ingredients on the label. Exposure to these chemicals can cause cancer, reproductive health issues, dizziness, as well as irritation of the skin, eyes, nose, and throat.



But I'm painting my nails outside, isn't that enough to reduce exposure? And how do I know which nail polish is safe?



Well, that's good. You want to make sure there is proper ventilation when using products with chemicals, whether you're getting your nails done at home or at the nail salon. You can also purchase nail polish that is water-based.

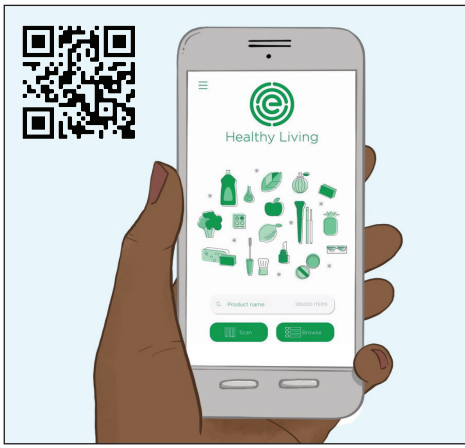


There's also this app called Healthy Living by the Environmental Working Group that's a great resource to help you find products that are safe. Just scan a product, review its rating, and make an informed choice. It's that easy! I'll send you the link right now.



Wow, I gotta check this out. This is news to me.





Don't worry friend, you've been eating healthier and managing stress better, even before you got pregnant. I'm sure everything will be fine.



I worry a lot though, you know we used to live near that oil drilling site where there was that rancid odor. What if it affected me and the baby?



Yes, that's concerning, but stay positive and wait for those results. I know you are nervous, even though you are excited about having the baby.



That's sweet of you, thank you, Leslie.



When Ashley and I FaceTime you, we'll tell you where to buy green chemical-free cleaning and disinfecting products and how to make your own!



Diane's Grandmother chimes in.



Thanks, but no thanks, Leslie. Diane is fine. In my day, we didn't use any fancy products. All we used was bleach. My mother used it and her mother used it and I still use it. You kids and your organic green products, that's all nonsense!

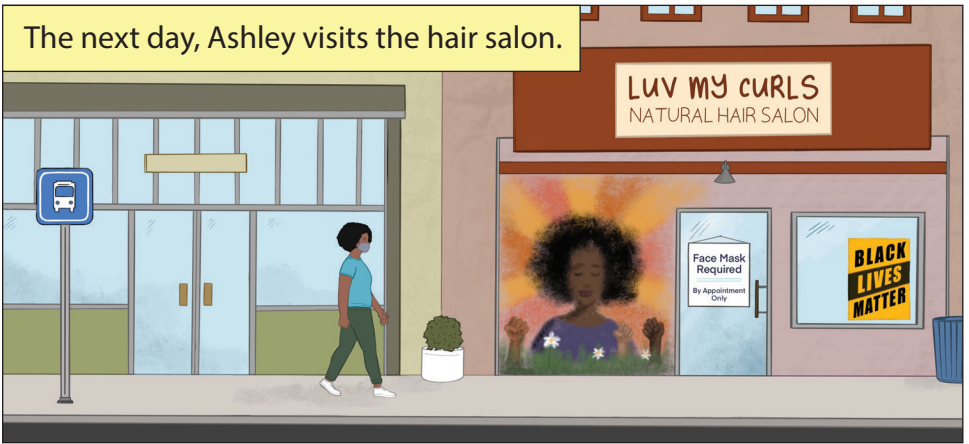
Please excuse Nana, Leslie. I love that she lives with me, but she's always eavesdropping.



No worries. I was the same until I actually started reading the ingredients in products and the potential harm to health. It takes time to make the switch to safer cleaning products, but I'm sure we can convince even your Nana to try. See you soon!



The next day, Ashley visits the hair salon.



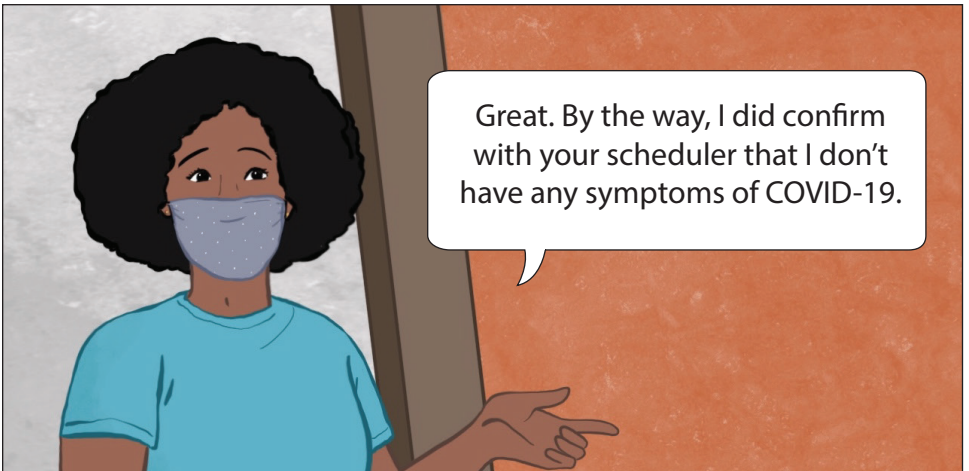
Good morning, I'm Ashley. I have an appointment.



Good morning, Ashley! Let me finish sanitizing my station and I will be right with you.




Great. By the way, I did confirm with your scheduler that I don't have any symptoms of COVID-19.



Glad to hear. We're doing our best to prevent exposure to coronavirus. We've staggered appointments, required face masks, and we make sure to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces. Now, what are you looking to get done?

Oh no, I'm sorry to hear that. Getting your hair dyed probably exposed you to lead and formaldehyde.



Actually, I would like your advice. The last time I got my hair dyed I felt dizzy and nauseous. Afterwards, my eyes were irritated for days.

What? I recently learned formaldehyde can be found in some nail polish and that it can cause problems with pregnancy and even birth defects, but I didn't know it's in hair products too!

Yes, Formaldehyde is even used in eyelash gels, shampoo, and hair dye. But you don't need to worry about that here at Luv My Curls, since I'll have you looking fabulous without chemicals!

Thanks, but this is all too much for me to keep track of. First, I have to look out for what's in my nail polish, now hair dye. What's next?

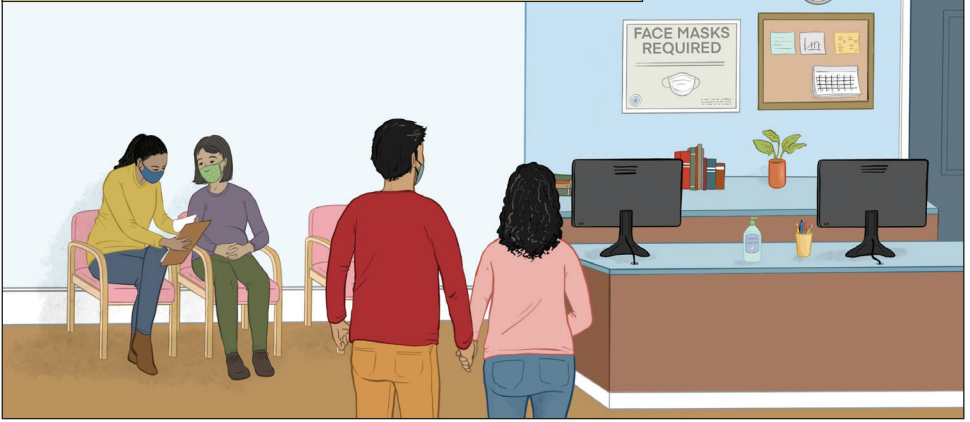
I agree, it can be overwhelming, but our health is worth the extra effort. To make it a little easier for you to remember, here's a wallet card that lists a few toxic chemicals to avoid when buying personal care or cleaning products. I give this to all my clients and tell them to also stay away from products that contain paraben, toluene, and phthalates.



What a great idea! Thanks for the information. I will pass this along to my family and friends.

Fantastic, now let's get started.

Nick and Diane at their doctor's appointment




I better use some hand sanitizer to clean my hands.

Actually, you should only use hand sanitizer when you don't have access to soap and water. Soap is the best way to stop the spread of infectious diseases.

I'll go wash my hands then. I'll meet you in the exam room.








What a relief! I guess our hard work has paid off. We've been trying to make healthier choices, especially during this pandemic.

The illustration shows a pregnant woman with dark hair and a yellow face mask, wearing a light blue hospital gown, gesturing with her hands. She is standing next to a man with short dark hair and a teal face mask, wearing a red hospital gown. They are in a hospital room with a bed, medical equipment, and a framed picture of a family on the wall.

We practice social distancing, wear face masks in public, and regularly clean and disinfect surfaces. We've been eating fresh or frozen foods and staying away from canned food because we know there can be chemicals in the lining of the can.



I'm glad to hear that. Those are good habits. However, it's not just about what we eat, it's also about the products we use such as beauty, personal care, cleaning, and disinfecting products. We also have to consider the environment and community where we live, or work.

The illustration shows a doctor with long dark hair, wearing a white lab coat, a white face mask, and a stethoscope, holding a clipboard. She is standing in the same hospital room as the pregnant woman and the man, who are now sitting on the bed. The doctor is speaking to them.



I've tried to use safer beauty, cleaning, and disinfecting products, but they don't always have the ingredients listed.

You should avoid products that don't list the ingredients. It is better to be safe than sorry.



Okay, I'll definitely stay away from those products during and after the pregnancy.



That's great you know it's also important for you to continue all these practices even after bringing the baby home.



Thank you doctor, we will make sure to continue following healthy habits.

Great! Don't forget to wash your hands on your way out. I will see you next month for your next appointment. Stay safe.

Leslie and Ashley facetime Diane



Hi Diane! What are you doing? Can you talk?



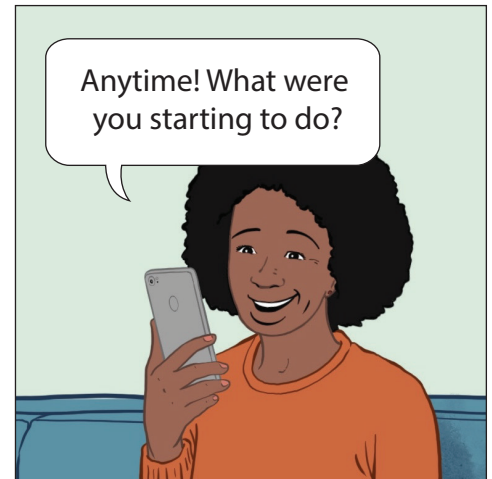
I'm so happy to see you! I just started cleaning the kitchen. I could really use your advice.



We're so happy to see you too! I've got some great tips on cleaning and disinfecting.



What would I do without you? With the baby coming, I need your suggestions more than ever.



Anytime! What were you starting to do?

Diane starts looking through the cabinets.

I was in the middle of finding my disinfecting products so that I can clean the kitchen.

Do you have Fantastico and bleach? I love mixing them together to disinfect, especially with the scare of the coronavirus.

Oh, nice to see you! Ashley, you're like me. It's not clean unless you use bleach and it smells like Fantastico!

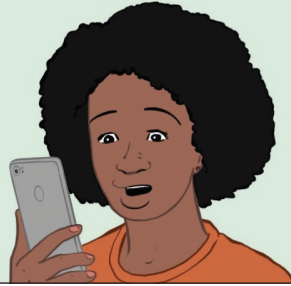
OMG! That's a recipe for disaster!

Diane pulls out baking soda, vinegar, lemon and dish soap.



Nana, you know that I don't use any of those toxic ingredients in my home anymore. Besides, mixing chemicals can be dangerous! It can create toxic fumes if combined with other products.

But I heard that vinegar doesn't kill the coronavirus. Don't you need something stronger?




That's correct, vinegar doesn't kill the coronavirus and bleach does. When I have to use bleach, I make sure there is ventilation and never mix it with other cleaners. Also, solutions with 70% alcohol work too.



Some people incorrectly use cleaners and disinfectants to try to prevent infection from the coronavirus. They misuse bleach to wash food and apply it to bare skin. It's safer to make your own and I can share my recipe with you.





Leslie, I went out and bought all the ingredients you told me to. Can you share the DIY (Do It Yourself) cleaning products recipe?

Of course, this DIY recipe is a safe and healthier alternative. I mix water, vinegar, baking soda, and lemon for scrubbing sinks, tubs, and toilets. Let me text the recipe right now.


Leslie shares her recipe for a DIY non-toxic cleaning product, using ingredients found in her own home.

1 cup of warm water
+ 1 cup of white vinegar
+ 1 Tbsp of baking soda

Optional:
Lemon for scent

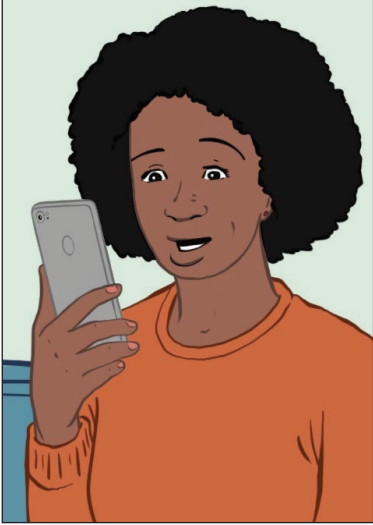


Diane's husband Nick arrives home from work.



One second, my husband just got home. Honey, you know the rules... work boots go outside and place your uniform inside your hamper. I don't want to put the baby at risk. Who knows what chemicals you've been exposed to at work.

Diane, I didn't realize you were such a germaphobe.



Actually, that's a good practice. Last year, my niece's pediatrician detected high lead levels in her blood. My brother and sister-in-law checked the house, the furniture, and her toys for lead, until they made the connection to my brother's work. My brother's work uniform had traces of lead, so not only was he exposed at work, but he was bringing that home.



Wow, I would've never thought to check all those places for lead. Maybe I should inspect all the gifts people recently sent for the baby.



Diane moves into the nursery.

Look, someone got us baby lotion. This baby lotion smells so good.



You should check the list of ingredients and if it has the Safer Choice logo.



United States Environmental Protection Agency

Aww, this t-shirt is so cute! Leslie, is there anything that we need to look out for with clothes?



Watch out for very old hand me downs that have a label that says "flame retardant", which luckily are now outlawed



I wish I knew about all this before my pregnancy, I would've taken more precautions.



Don't be hard on yourself. We're all learning.



I say we all commit to making more informed choices when it comes to the products we use. And, it's never too late for us to plan for a healthy home, body, and baby!

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