



Healthy Families Homebirth

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Environmental Hazards

A *tetragon* is any environmental agent that causes damage during to your baby during pregnancy. There are four factors that should be taken into consideration when being exposed to a substance:

Dose of the substance- when a harmful substance is taken over a longer time there are usually more negative effects.

Heredity of the mother and fetus- some individuals are able to withstand harmful effects better than others

Increased negative influences- poor diet or several other negative influences combined can increase the influence of any one tetragon

Age of the mother or age of the fetus- before the baby has implanted into the uterus, the baby is living on its own nutrients. During development, the baby is more sensitive and closer to birth the baby is less sensitive. When a mother is younger, her body is more efficient at processing toxins, but with age toxins are stored longer.

Common tetragons to avoid:

- ❖ Insecticide, herbicide, and fungicide. Try organic gardening or organic insecticides that break down quicker than the chemical counterparts. Find a local lawn company that uses natural fertilizers and ways of keeping your lawn healthy.
- ❖ Paint and paint removers. Try Low/No-VOC paint that is widely available now. Look for Dimethylformamide-free paint removers.
- ❖ Carbon monoxide. Install a carbon monoxide detector in your bedroom. Common exposure can be from a furnace that is leaking or car exhaust. This is a silent, odor-free killer.
- ❖ Dyes, resins, lacquers, varnishes, and stains. Look for products that are Methyl Cellosolve free
- ❖ Lead. Homes built before 1980 may have lead based paint. Note any places where the paint is chipping and call a professional to remove the problem. Note: removing lead based paint should be not only done by a professional but also the site should be tested for lead after the site is finished. Lead particles can be released into the air or settle onto the floor and cause exposure. Batteries are another exposure risk factor. Store all batteries properly and dispose of them at appropriate sites.

This is general information. Please speak to your health care provider about your unique health needs.



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- ❖ Household cleaners. Chlorine, ammonia, and other common cleaners should be avoided. Try using white vinegar, laundry hydrogen peroxide, steam carpet cleaning, and other natural cleaners to clean the house. This is a good habit to get into because your baby will be touching and tasting much of your home once he/she becomes mobile.

Many chemical exposures can also happen at the workplace. Ask your employer to view the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for your exposure risks. Common jobs that increase risk of exposure are:

Textile work, tailors, upholsters, fabric making, nurses, medical office techs, dental hygienist, laboratory workers, electronic assemblers, farm workers, hairdressers, cosmetologists, launderers, maids, dry cleaners, film photographic processors, plastic fabricators and workers, transportation operators, sign painters, painting operators, optician, lens grinders, painters-house, interior, etc.

Remember that our home and work are the places that we spend the most time. Creating change in the home is possible. At work, reducing risk may take a little more creativity. Perhaps there is another duty you can do to decrease risk, maybe there is protective gear that can be worn. Work with your employer to help decrease exposure to potential harmful substances.

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