

Paul Jolly
WISE English
Jolly
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Three Major Problems, Three Major Opportunities

American homes are revealed to be cesspools of toxic chemicals. Trawlers return from the seas with fewer fish than ever before. As global temperatures rise, climate changes in unpredictable and often disastrous ways. While there are many issues facing the world's environment today, these three are the most important – not only for the dangers they pose, but for the solutions which are already available.

In this report, I will give an overview of each issue, explain how it's come about, tell who is affected and how, and offer some solutions to each problem.

I. Household Toxins

“Household toxins” refers to chemicals which are commonly found in the home and which have been proven to be poisonous. While few of us would willingly put poisons in our homes, most of us do so unwittingly. We breathe chemical fumes, consume trace particles in our food, and absorb toxins directly through our skin.

Many of these chemical poisons are known to us. For example, bleach has long been known as the #1 source of dioxin, the most potent cancer-causing chemical known to humans. However, there are many which we are unaware of. Of these, the worst are the class of chemicals known as **phthalates**. These are a group of compounds which are used to make plastics more flexible & resilient. They are also used as solvents. Vinyl, for example, is a type of plastic found in nearly every home - and it is phthalates which make it flexible & give it the notorious stink we associate with such items as new shower curtains. In fact, nearly every flexible plastic is made pliable by this chemical, from baby toys to garden hoses to linoleum. Phthalates are also found in most lotions, shampoos, and baby powder. The danger of phthalates is real: studies have associated them with testicular atrophy, mutations in male reproductive organs, and increased risk of liver cancer.

There are, fortunately, several ways to rid your home and your life from phthalates.

1. Avoid plastics with recycling codes of 1, 3, & 7; these are more likely to contain the chemical. Opt instead for plastics with codes 2, 4, and 5.
2. Buy non-vinyl shower curtains. Those made from polyester, for example, are phthalate-free.
3. Avoid scented products as much as possible. Most artificial fragrances are loded with phthalates, which you'll inhale directly into your bloodstream. Opt instead for unscented products whenever possible.

II. Overfishing

(writeup as above).