

# Harmful Chemicals Outside Your Home

## Protect Your Baby When You're Pregnant



Take these easy, affordable steps to limit your contact with harmful chemicals. Even small changes can have big health benefits for you and your baby.

**Keep fuel (like lawn mower gas) away from your home** — in a shed, for example — instead of in a basement or attached garage. That way, you'll be less likely to breathe in chemicals in fuel (like benzene).

**Get free Air Quality Index alerts.\*** Then you'll know when to expect high levels of **air pollution** in your community.

When you're physically active you breathe in more air. That's why it's important to **limit your outdoor physical activity when levels of air pollution are high**. When air quality is poor, exercise inside that day instead.

**Keep places where bugs and pests hide** — like woodpiles or trashcans — away from your home. You will be less likely to need **pesticides**.

If you have a lawn, **don't use lawn care products** — they may have harmful **pesticides**. Instead, choose grasses and plants that are natural to your area and grow well without chemical sprays.

\*<http://www.enviroflash.info/signup.cfm>



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Agency for Toxic Substances  
and Disease Registry

# Harmful Chemicals to Avoid Outside Your Home

**These chemicals can affect how your baby grows and develops.**

**Air pollution** can be caused by factories, cars and trucks, construction, and forest fires. When women are pregnant, breathing in high levels of air pollution can affect how their unborn babies grow.

**Benzene** is a chemical in gasoline. It's also added to other products, like some dyes and detergents. Breathing in benzene or getting it on the skin can be harmful for pregnant women. Benzene may affect how unborn babies' bones grow.

**Pesticides** are chemicals used to kill mice, bugs, or weeds. Some people use pesticides in their homes, gardens, or yards. Fresh fruits and vegetables may also have pesticides on them. Studies show that some pesticides may affect how unborn babies and newborns develop.

**For more information about how to protect yourself from harmful chemicals when you're pregnant, visit [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/public/exposures.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emes/public/exposures.html)**

They get into your body in 3 ways:



**Swallowing them**  
(ingesting)



**Breathing them in**  
(inhaling)



**Touching them**  
(absorbing through  
your skin)

Once the chemical is in your body,  
it may affect your baby too.