

GO GREEN



Creating a cleaner, greener, and safer home for your children is easier than you think



Keeping a home green not only helps the environment, but may also help prevent chronic diseases and ailments that can affect children, a new book argues.

Everything from the bubble bath your kids soak in to that new toy all the mothers raved about at the last play date, may actually contain toxins posing risks to our kids' vulnerable, developing bodies, says Christopher Gavi-

gan, author of *Healthy Child Healthy World*, and CEO of a non-profit organization by the same name (Dutton, \$25.95).

"Luckily, it's easier than you think to make simple, wise choices to create a healthy, non-toxic, and environmentally sound home that allows your family to flourish," Gavigan says.

Gavigan doesn't imply we all live in a ticking time bomb

set to unleash toxins that can cause autism, allergies, cancer and asthma. However, the book reminds us of a growing body of research pointing to unseen threats from exposures to chemicals in everyday products like cleaning supplies, cosmetics, furnishings, plastics, and some foods and toys as contributing to these ailments. Gavigan is confident that virtually every home could be made safer, cleaner and greener with simple changes.

"No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Every little step you take at home helps your family live in a healthier environment," Gavigan says.

Healthy Child Healthy World's efforts are strengthened by well-known pediatricians and experts contribut-

ing to the book, as well the many parents and celebrities sharing personal stories and efforts to creating an environmentally safe lifestyles. Among them are Tom Hanks, Gwyneth Paltrow (who offers a couple of recipes), Brooke Shields, Sheryl Crow, Michelle Obama, Erin Brockovich, and Meryl Streep (who wrote the book's foreword).

"So much that's out there now is about what you should not do," Streep writes. "*Healthy Child Healthy World* helps mothers and fathers connect the dots, to understand cause and effect ... it tries to emphasize the healthful solutions, the positive, easy-to-follow steps you can take for your family, your home, yourself."

Gavigan offers tips like these to help make that hap-

pen:

Keep cleaning simple. You don't need a chemical arsenal to keep your house clean. Most messes are easily erased using ingredients like baking soda, vinegar, and lemon juice. They are effective, inexpensive, and safer.

Learn what labels mean. A lot of claims made on product labels are unregulated or misleading. For example, you may think a food label that says something is "all natural" would mean it gets a green light from the green police. Not so fast. The product could still be contaminated with potentially harmful chemicals, hormones, or genetically modified organisms. Look for items that are "100% certified organic."

Buy toys that are good for kids and the planet. Those

made with solid wood, nontoxic paints and natural finishes are not only free of harmful chemicals and toxins, but also look good and last longer. While a little pricier, their durability allows them to be passed down to a younger child.

Use fewer personal care products and select ones with safer ingredients. If your baby has a diaper rash, avoid creams with petroleum products, fragrances or unnecessary chemicals. Zinc diaper cream usually does the trick. So do home remedies like corn starch and aloe vera gel. Never use talc baby powder. It can cause lung irritation and may have traces of asbestos.

For more information, visit www.HealthyChild.org/Book.

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